

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1902.

PRINCESS PUCK.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Do come here for Christmas," wrote Bella to Bill from Haylands about the middle of December. "You must come, if it is only for a week. It is nonsense for Polly to say she can't spare you; she simply must. Theresa thinks that it will do you good. She won't believe what Polly says about the way in which you have taken this breaking off with Gilchrist; she thinks you must be upset, and that to come here might do you good. I enclose a postal order for six shillings for the fare. Polly is sure to say you can't afford it; Theresa and I can, and we want you to come."

And in spite of Polly's protestations and objections Bill went. Polly could not go; she had one lodger now and could not shut the house up. But seeing that he was only one, and one who did not require much waiting on, and seeing also that Bella and Theresa had paid Bill's fare, there was no reason why she should not go. So Bill went to Wrugglesby, and Bella and Theresa, who had driven from Ashelton for some shopping, met her and brought her home.

Bella was glad Bill was coming, although, she reflected, if the girl was really as disturbed as Theresa imagined about her broken engagement she would be but poor company and

not much relief from the dulness of Haylands. For some reason or other it had been dull there that autumn, at least on the days when Jack did not come. Theresa, who had always been quiet, was more quiet than ever now; she seemed to have aged during the past months, or else Bella, used to associating with the livelier if more unprincipled Polly, thought so. "Marriage does alter people," thought Bella, and fell to speculating about herself and Jack. There really was very little to think about at Haylands, very little to talk about in all Ashelton. Even Miss Minchin, at the fortnightly working-parties, had nothing fresh to say, and so went untiringly over the nine days' wonder of Gilchrist Harborough's claim to Wood Hall.

Miss Minchin might not be tired of that, but Bella was, and by the beginning of December she had heard quite enough of that and most other subjects of Ashelton conversation. But about that time she and Theresa found a fresh subject in the letter Bill wrote to them after Gilchrist's visit to London. She wrote by one post, and by the next Polly wrote a good two ounces of lamentation, indignation, and abuse, the last both of Theresa and her "ridiculous secrecy," and also, in a far larger degree, of Bill and her obstinacy. Theresa was much perplexed; neither she nor

Bella could understand how it had come about; there was no explanation, except that Bill had availed herself of their permission to change her mind, and that somehow seemed unlikely. Bella was inclined to blame Gilchrist, and cited several instances when his devotion had fallen short of Jack's. Theresa, on the other hand, was for putting the change down to girlish caprice. She made a point of talking to Gilchrist on the subject, but without enlightening herself to any great extent. "Of course I could not cross-question him," she wrote to Polly, and was naturally not aware of that lady's wrathful exclamation,—*"I know I could then!"*

Although Theresa did not hear this, or any other of Polly's remarks, she could guess their nature, and her invitation to Bill was given partly with a view of saving the girl from the ceaseless bombardment of the elder cousin's wrath. As it happened, however, Polly was comparatively merciful in her indignation; she knew when words were a waste of breath, and understood with some precision when she could, and when she could not, move her partner. Consequently Bill was let off easily, and for that, or for some other reason, she did not seem at all unhappy when she stepped out on the platform at Wrugglesby station. The sisters, who met her, recognised the fact at once, and Bella at least was glad of it as she helped to carry Polly's hat-box to the pony-carriage. Bill talked a good deal on the homeward way seeming anything but depressed. Once when they were clear of the town she looked round and said softly: *"How beautiful it is! How very, very beautiful it is out here!"*

Bella thought the girl must be expressing her delight at leaving London and all her troubles behind her. She could see no beauty in the

landscape,—bare fields spread wide beneath the winter sky; gaunt, black-limbed elms and leafless hedgerows where the twilight crept mysteriously; a pale flare of sunset breaking through the ashen clouds to make the level land luminous and show near objects with a wonderful distinctness; stacks and barns and low-roofed cottages whence the smoke in thin spirals went straightly up into the evening air.

Robert came out to meet the pony-carriage with quite a cheerful smile of welcome.

"Here, brother-in-law Laziness," Bill said, filling his arms with Theresa's parcels; "take some more, you can have these. I've got the sugar, T."

And they went in-doors, Robert's setter slobbering over Bill,—she never had a dress that could be hurt by a dog's caress—and sheepishly following them into the forbidden precincts of the house.

"You are jolly cold, I expect," Robert said as he poked the fire into a blaze. "Get your boots off and warm your feet. Where are your slippers? In this thing? Is this the key tied on outside?"

Bill said it was; in her opinion to tie its key to the handle of an article was a sure way of having the key when you wanted it. Robert unfastened the box and rummaged over the contents with clumsy hands till he found the shoes; afterwards he put the things back anyhow, so that the box had to be carried up-stairs with the lid open.

How they talked that evening! Bella and Robert, even Theresa as well as Bill. Bill wanted to know everything, about the horses and dogs, the cows and pigs; what that stack had yielded when it was threshed, how the potatoes were keeping, why the long meadow was ploughed. She

wanted to know all about everybody in the place, how they were and what new clothes they had; she wanted to know when Jack came last and when he was coming next, what quantity of butter Theresa was getting now, and the pattern of the lace Bella had bought for her petticoats.

Somehow or other the common-places of life, the veriest trivialities assumed a vivid interest with Bill; the life which had seemed rather dull in the living became full of humour and incident when told to her. Her own life in London, when she told them about it, seemed almost fascinating. Bella found herself wishing that she had insisted on joining the lodging venture; she did not realise that the life, like the flat wintry landscape, required to be looked at through the lens of a particular kind of mind to assume the aspect it did for Bill.

One could not help being conscious of Bill's presence in the house. By the next afternoon Theresa was beginning to be aware of the difference she made. Bill had been in the attic that morning and looked over the nuts and apples that she herself had put there; she had brought down the rotten ones and brought down also the rose-leaves, put away to dry and forgotten. She had been round the barns and stables and out into the frozen garden, round the orchard to look for broken branches and dead wood for burning, into the icy dairy to help Jessie and hear about her love-affairs.

"It's like openin' the winders on a summer mornin'," Jessie said, when just before dinner Bill passed the kitchen-door with some Christmas roses she had found in a sheltered corner of the garden. She had gone to the pantry to arrange them in a glass, singing as she did so. Strangely enough she had not sung or whistled since that September morning at

Bymouth when she mimicked the birds while Kit Harborough wrung out her wet bathing-dress. But she did not know this, neither did Jessie, though she heard the singing appreciatively now. Still, it was not that which caused her remark when Bill, now quiet, passed the kitchen-door.

"It do freshen the house up wonderful to have you here again, miss; it's for all the world like openin' the winders on a sunny mornin'."

But Bill scarcely understood the allusion any more than Theresa did the fact. Theresa certainly did not understand; she was glad to have the girl back again, but felt that she was more incomprehensible than ever. Her whole attitude towards Gilchrist and the broken engagement was extraordinary to Theresa. She questioned Bill of course, and learned practically nothing, though her questions were answered freely enough. Bill was glad when the questioning was over; she was very tired of the subject and she wanted to hear about Bella's *trousseau*; also she wanted to go and see Mr. Dane.

Mr. Dane knew nothing about the engagement; there was no reason now why Bill should tell him, yet that afternoon, as she knelt on his hearthrug in the twilight, she suddenly determined to do so and to ask his opinion on her own course of action. It was after one of those pleasant, companionable silences which often fell between them that she approached the subject, entirely without introduction, as was her way. "Monseigneur," she said abruptly, "do you think it is ever right to break a promise,—a promise to marry someone, I mean?"

"To marry someone!" Mr. Dane repeated, and though his tone was only surprised there was a gravity in his manner as if he feared trouble

in the near future. "Yes," he said after a moment's consideration, "in some circumstances I do think it right to break such a promise."

"What circumstances?"

"If the person giving the promise finds out afterwards that he or she does not love the one to whom it is given."

"If one of the two finds that out?" Bill said in surprise. "You do not really think that is enough? You would not break a promise for that, you would not think it honourable; it would not be either—neither honourable nor right."

"It would not be right for some people," Mr. Dane admitted; "but for others—" he broke off abruptly, and after a pause turned to her with an almost terrible earnestness. "Child," he said, "do not think I am trifling with right and wrong; indeed I am not. Yet still I say that, though it might not be honourable for some to break such a promise, for you it would not be a question of honour or dishonour but of absolute necessity."

"I did not think so."

"You?" he exclaimed with an excitement which astonished her; "you did not think so?"

"No," she said, "I did not. I promised to marry Gilchrist Harbrough, but I did not love him."

"Then, in God's name, do not marry him! You don't know what you are doing. Do you think it worse to break your promise and dishonour your word, or to break a man's heart and dishonour him, yourself, and God's law, all that is most holy and most binding on earth?"

And then Bill realised what she had done, and how her words had wounded her friend. Had he not married a woman who did not love? Had he not suffered to the full the

utmost bitterness of which he spoke? As she realised how she had reopened the tragedy of his life the girl was struck dumb with remorse, too grieved for the moment to think of explaining the circumstances of her own affairs.

But Mr. Dane did not know the reason of her silence, and he went on, his face drawn and stern. "You do not know your own history nor the danger which may threaten you. I do; and knowing, I say you must not, cannot marry a man you do not truly love. It is a mockery to pray 'lead us not into temptation' and then to put yourself in temptation's way. There is a passion which is stronger than you; it may sleep now but it will not always sleep, believe me, it will not always sleep. Listen now: first concerning your mother. You did not know her, neither did I, but you yourself told me she married in defiance of her parents; she loved the man and counted them well lost for him. And he,—he loved her, bewitched her, desired her,—she had no will but to go,—I know how it was done."

"You knew my father!"

"No, I knew his father. I saw the spell at work; I know the will of those Alardys and the power of their love; I have good reason to know. Your grandmother, the first Wilhelmina, I knew her too. She was another man's wife; she married him though she did not love him; she thought it was safe; she did not know—then came this other—"

He stopped abruptly. He was pacing the far side of the room with the restlessness almost of a young man; he stood in the shadow now, but she sat regarding him wide-eyed, something almost of horror in her face. That he should tear open these old wounds for her, his wife's grandchild, Wilhelmina's grandchild!

Wilhelmina! Yes, she knew now, the links in the chain were joined and she knew, although she murmured, — "My grandmother, Wilhelmina Corby?"

"Yes," he said, and then he came into the firelight and his face was very pitiful. "Child, child," he said sadly, "there are passions of which you know nothing; pray God you never may!"

The girl's eyes suddenly filled with tears: "Do you not hate me?" she whispered.

But he did not hate her. The blessed years which had taught him not to hate, taught him to be merciful as well as just. "No, Princess Puck," he said smiling gently, "I do not think I hate you."

She crept dog-like to his side of the fire. "Shall I tell you something," he said, reaching a hand down to touch her hair, "something which I do not count the least of my blessings this year?—God's goodness in sending to me, whom He has denied wife or child, a little brown elf for a grand-daughter."

Bill could not speak. She only mutely pressed against his chair, and for a long time they sat silent while he softly stroked her hair and the ashes fell quietly on the hearth. At last the old man spoke again; he had been thinking of the girl's half-made confidence and it troubled him greatly. "This promise of which you spoke," he said,— "is it to be kept or broken?"

Bill started like one awakening. "Broken," she said, "I have broken it;" and she told him the whole story, always, of course, excepting that which was said, or rather was not said, when she and Kit Harborough met under the beeches on a day when a dream proved to be a dream no longer. But perhaps Mr. Dane discovered a little of that

for himself, for when he said good-bye to her that night he realised that his Princess Puck was a child no more.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was towards the end of January that Bella came to town to finish buying her *trousseau*. A *trousseau* is a really momentous affair, and Bella, feeling that the shops at Wrugglesby were not equal to the occasion, came to Bayswater, where Polly gave her limitless advice and all the help in her power. Polly really enjoyed Bella's visit, and Bill, who knew Polly's weakness, did all the housework so that the elder cousin should be free to go shopping or help with the needlework according as the opportunity offered. During the time Bella was in London it seemed to Bill that they thought of, talked of, and considered very little beyond clothes, except perhaps once or twice in the evenings when Bella told them a little about Ashelton. Such conversations did not interest Polly, but as Bill liked them Bella talked to her. Once indeed Polly showed some interest, when Bella spoke of the change in Theresa and Robert.

"They both have altered a good deal," she concluded, — "especially Robert. You saw him at Christmas, Bill; don't you think he is changing?"

"Not changing exactly," Bill said, "he is,—I think he is developing, growing to what you would expect. Some kinds of people are bound to grow in particular kinds of ways; they can hardly help themselves."

"I don't like Robert's kind of way then. I think he has changed a good deal, and for the worse; so would you if you had stayed at Haylands as long as I have."

Bill did not explain that what

Bella called "a change for the worse" and she "a natural growing" were one and the same thing; she did not say anything about it, though she felt a good deal, and knew that she could not help Theresa now any more than she could have helped her last spring.

Bella had gone on to speak of the change in Theresa and of the quiet of Haylands. "Hardly a soul comes there now," she said; "Theresa keeps them all at arm's length. I expect that is why Miss Minchin and Mrs. Jackson and the rest of them never come now. Of course Gilchrist Harborough would not come."

Polly heaved a deep sigh. "I expect Bill's breaking with Gilchrist troubled Theresa a good deal," she said.

But Bella laughed at such an idea, and afterwards went on to speak of Gilchrist and the lawsuit. "He has so little spare time just now," she said, "that I don't believe he would go to see anyone except on business. Jack sees him sometimes, and that is how I get to hear about him and his case. He is rather disgusted with it just now, Jack says, abuses the lawyers, and professes a great contempt for the slowness of the law."

Bill opened her eyes. "Why," she said, "he has only just begun! It will be two years before it is over. What did he expect?"

"How do you know?" demanded Polly.

"I was told," Bill answered, and Bella saved her further explanation by remarking: "That is what Mr. Stevens says; he told Jack so, and Jack told Gilchrist."

"What did he say?" Bill inquired.

"Oh, that he did not see how they were going to make the time out, but he supposed they would do it somehow. Jack said he seemed disgusted with everything that day, and vowed he would not mind selling his chances for a good sum down."

"Did he say that?" Bill asked quickly. "He told Jack that! But he couldn't do it, he couldn't sell his chances; they would be no good to anyone else."

"He could sell them to the other side," Bella said with the pride of recently acquired knowledge. "Jack told me that if the Harboroughs were rich they would probably by the autumn, if his claim seemed pretty good, try to compromise,—pay him to withdraw, you know. But then they are not rich; they have no spare money at all, and Jack says he does not think they could raise any. It seems rather a pity, for Jack says he believes Gilchrist would agree to a reasonable arrangement; he does not care a bit about Wood Hall now and only wants to go back to Australia."

"We all know why that is," Polly said with pious conviction. "Bill has only herself to thank if he does leave England like that."

"I don't suppose it would make any difference to Bill if he did go," Bella retorted; "and she certainly has nothing to do with his wanting to go. Jack says he is disgusted with people in general, with the lawyers and the other claimant much more than with Bill."

"Poor Gilchrist!" Polly said with commiseration, and continued to look in a meaning manner at Bill, who, however, was far too absorbed in the thoughts suggested to her by Bella's words to heed her.

Long that night she lay thinking of these new ideas, her brain full of conflicting thoughts, impossible plans, crazy fancies. Money, money,—she had never felt the want of it before, never, for all her poverty, felt any desire to be rich. She had always been poor and she had never minded; she had never been tempted by girlish superfluities, had never cared for ribbons and laces and nice food. But

now,—now she wanted money desperately, not a few shillings, or a few pounds as Polly, who did mind being poor, wanted it; but money in the big sense of the word, in the sense in which Polly never wanted it, in which she herself had hardly contemplated it before. Not that it mattered whether she wanted much or little, shillings or pounds or hundreds of pounds; one seemed about as attainable as the other.

It was always part of Bill's work to get up and clean the boots and light the fires before breakfast; it was no very great effort to her, and seemed moreover to fall naturally to her share. On the morning after she had lain so long thinking over the problem of ways and means, she got up as usual, cleaned the lodgers' boots, lighted the fires, washed her hands, and then, taking a candle from the kitchen-dresser, climbed on the back of a chair that stood against the wall. Moving an almanack hanging high above it, a hole became visible from which she drew out, wrapped in paper, Peter Harborough's shoe-buckles. For a long time she stood looking at them. Once she rubbed them on the corner of her apron; once she held them close to the candle so that the brilliant, refracted light flashed back from the gems and scattered sparks of white fire over her face and hands. She could not tell what they were worth, perhaps a hundred pounds, perhaps two hundred, —Polly had said two; diamonds were very valuable she knew, but how valuable she could not tell. At last she wrapped the buckles up again, put them back in their hiding-place and went about her work with a thoughtful face.

She wore a thoughtful face all that day, for she was revolving a plan in her mind. In the afternoon she went to her bedroom and there opened the

little oak box which used to stand in the spare room at Langford House. She had only been to it once since last winter, but now she turned over its contents carefully. She was not much the wiser for her examination; the only papers old enough to interest her conveyed little to her mind, beyond the indisputable fact that the name Corby appeared in them. However, her failure to find anything important in the little chest did not alter her plans, and in the evening, when the elder cousins were at leisure, she spoke to Polly about them. Bella and Polly had been busy with the *trousseau* all day, but by the evening they were able to listen to Bill when she informed them that she was going to Wrugglesby the next day.

"To Wrugglesby!" Bella exclaimed. "What on earth are you going there for?"

But this Bill was not prepared to say; she expected to be asked the question and several others, and to give much annoyance by not answering them, but it could not be avoided. She felt that she could not explain matters yet. Things fell out exactly as she anticipated; Bella was only curious, but Polly was decidedly angry; she felt that she had a right to inquire, and she exercised it,—with no good results for when, on Bill's refusing to assign any reasons, she forbade her going to Wrugglesby, the girl showed every intention of going in spite of her. Whereupon Polly, who by this time knew she could not always drive the stubborn Bill, became very dignified, retreating from her post of dictator behind a manner of superior and chilling indifference, after which she climbed down from her pinnacle of outraged authority and informed the offender that she should not pay her fare.

"No, of course not," Bill said readily; "I have some money."

And she had; for it so happened that after a battle royal with Polly one day she had succeeded in arranging for wages of a pound a month, the same as any other little servant. Polly had vowed that she should not have it, that she was a partner in the firm and not a paid servant, but Bill stood to her guns, foregoing any future profits but insisting on present wages; and as she struck work when they were not paid she contrived to get them regularly, and so to have a little money for an emergency. Remembering which Polly said ungraciously: "At any rate you can't go until the one o'clock train."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE one o'clock train was a very slow one, but it suited Bill admirably, and by it she went the next day.

It was nearly three when the one clerk who looked out on Wrugglesby High Street from Mr. Stevens's office-window, saw the small figure cross the road and come towards the door.

"A lady to see you, sir,—Miss Alardy."

The clerk announced this to his employer, although he thought Miss Alardy an exceedingly young lady to consult a lawyer on her own account. Mr. Stevens thought so too; he had a hazy recollection on hearing the name that she must be one of Miss Brownlow's nieces, but he was not sure of the relationship until he saw the girl. Then he remembered her as the youngest of the nieces, the one whom, it seemed only the other day, he used to see walking beside the governess with a dusky mane of hair hanging about her shoulders and a general appearance suggestive of a tendency to turn very restive on provocation.

"Well, and what has brought you to Wrugglesby?" he said when he

had asked after the other cousins. No one treated Bill in a business-like way; even the grocer at Bayswater regarded her as a man and a brother. Mr. Stevens certainly had no idea of being professionally consulted by this slip of a girl.

"I have come to see you," she answered simply. "I want to ask you a question, a law question."

She had her purse in her hand and looked somehow as if she were prepared to pay six-and-eightpence, cash down, for his opinion.

"I will try to answer you," he said with as much gravity as he could contrive. "What is this question?"

"It begins in the year 1799," she said without more ado. "In that year a man, Roger Corby,—perhaps you have heard of him? But that does not matter—in the year 1799 he gave a piece of land to another man—Briant. He gave it for ninety-nine years but no rent was to be paid."

"A lease, that is," the lawyer said, "and the rental probably one peppercorn payable if demanded. Yes, proceed."

"This year," Bill said, "the time will be up, and I imagine Roger Corby would get his land back if he were alive?"

"Naturally."

"But he is not alive, so I suppose his descendants would get it?"

"Yes, that is what is usually expected to take place."

"He has only got one descendant: she comes like this," and Bill took up some books which lay on the table. "Roger Corby's only son died a year after him,"—she put a thin black book down,—"*he is dead, you see*"—pushing the book away—"and so does not count. The son's only child, a daughter, is dead too, but she married when she was fairly young and she married twice. She ran

away from her first husband and he divorced her; then she married the other man and had one son, the only child she had. Well, the son is dead too and the only person left is his daughter. Would she be able to get the land at the end of the ninety-nine years?"

"Most probably, if she has the necessary documents and can prove she is legally descended from Roger Corby."

Bill said "Thank you," and sat thinking a minute. The lawyer watched her curiously, feeling sure there must be something behind all this, and wondering a little what it could be.

"Mr. Briant," Bill said at last,—"I mean the Mr. Briant who now has the land—does not think it will be claimed, at least I believe not; he probably does not know of the second marriage of Wilhelmina Corby, and the son and the granddaughter."

"Which means," Stevens observed, "that he will very strongly object to acknowledging their existence and will do his best to keep what he has got. Were I the granddaughter, I think I should first make quite sure that the thing in question was worth fighting for, and also I should be very clear that Wilhelmina Corby was divorced from her first husband and legally married to her second; can you tell me these things?"

Bill could tell him one of the things. "Do you know Sandover?" she asked. "Yes? A good part of Sandover now stands on the land; of course at the time it was given it was only corn fields and grass, but now it must be valuable."

Mr. Stevens whistled, although it was supposed to be a business interview. "It is worth something, I admit. Now for Wilhelmina Corby,—how about her?"

"It would have to be found out,"

Bill said, "but I believe it is all right. But tell me, what did you mean by necessary documents?"

"First and principally the counterpart of the lease. You don't know what that is? It is an exact copy of the deed, the lease which is in possession of the man who now has the land and by right of which he has it. There is certain to have been such a deed; this man, Briant, is sure to have his lease, and unless the granddaughter can produce her counterpart she would find it well nigh impossible to prove her case. Has she got it, do you think?"

Bill did not know, and Mr. Stevens went on to say:—"In the first instance it would probably have been among Roger Corby's papers, and so it may have passed into his granddaughter's keeping; if it did, the question is what became of it when she changed husbands? And if she kept it in her possession, has her granddaughter got it still, or failing that, is it possible to trace it?"

Bill considered a while; she was thinking of the little oak box and her search in it. "There is an oak box," she said at last; "it is used as an ottoman in my bedroom, but I have heard that it belonged to my grandmother. It is full of papers, mostly letters and recipes of my mother's, but there are a few which are older, one or two very large, tough, yellowish ones, not written in the ordinary way. I looked at them yesterday but I could not make them out, except that the name Corby occurs in them, and that at least one has the date 1799. Do you think the thing we want is there?"

"I think it is just possible." Mr. Stevens was not altogether surprised at this dropping of the impersonal. "So you are the granddaughter of Wilhelmina Corby, are you?"

"Yes. I did not bring the box with me, but I wish I had now."

"Perhaps there is nothing of value in it. What are these old papers like? Can you describe them to me?"

Bill did as well as she could, and though the description was not very detailed Mr. Stevens seemed satisfied. "I do not know," he said, "if you have the counterpart, but I should say from what you tell me that you must have one or two of the old Corby documents. Don't think that I mean they are of any pecuniary value, as the chances are all against it; the counterpart, if we could find it, might be, but the others are just so much legal lumber."

Bill did not seem troubled by this discouraging remark, nor yet by the lawyer's next words: "If it is not a rude question, may I ask how much of all this does your cousin's solicitor know?"

"We have not got a solicitor," Bill answered readily. "Mr. Brownlow made Aunt Isabel's will, but he is dead now, and when he was alive we did not see anything of him. Polly thought him very stupid."

"Polly? That's Miss Haines is it not? Has your coming to me her sanction?"

It had not, for the very good reason that Bill had not consulted her on the subject, or even informed her that any such subject existed; accordingly she told Mr. Stevens so, and explained that the affair was her own entirely.

"Am I to understand," the puzzled man enquired, "that she knows nothing at all about this?"

"No," Bill told him, "she doesn't even know my grandmother was a Corby. I did not know much myself before Christmas, and when I did know, it hardly seemed worth while telling her. I did not realise then

that it might be valuable; I did not realise that till the night before last."

"The night before last? What happened then?"

"I wanted money desperately, and I thought and thought of ways of getting it."

Mr. Stevens repressed an inclination to smile. "You have by no means got it yet in spite of your interesting story," he said. "Let me enumerate some of the difficulties in the way. Supposing you have the counterpart of the lease and it is all correct, you have got to be sure of several things,—that none of all these people between yourself and Roger Corby were bankrupt, that they made no awkward marriage-settlements, and, if they died intestate, left no more than one child apiece to survive them."

"These things will have to be found out," Bill said calmly. "Marriage-settlements I don't know anything about; children I do. There were no more than I have said, or at least none that lived to grow up; I have no relations at all on my father's side. As for bankrupt, I believe it is all right, but I am not sure; Roger Corby died in debt, though I think it was all paid off after his death. But I know he was in debt when he died, that is why Wilhelmina, my grandmother, had his body carried away by night."

Mr. Stevens had heard something of this story but always believed it to be a mere local tradition. "I had no idea it really happened," he said.

Bill assured him that she had excellent reasons for believing that it did; then she returned to the subject of more direct interest to herself. "Supposing," she said, "that all these things of which you spoke were right, what then?"

"Then, if you can get over the difficulty of the divorce and remarriage

and subsequent birth of a son, you should have a very good case and ought, if all goes well, eventually to get the money you so much need; or rather certain persons in authority would get it to hold in trust for you."

"In trust for me!" Bill said with a rather anxious look.

"Certainly; you are not of age yet are you? Eighteen? The law does not consider you of age till you are twenty-one. Until that time the money, if you get it, will be in the hands of guardians who will manage it entirely and only allow you the use of a moderate and reasonable proportion."

"Polly and Theresa are called my guardians; would they have to look after the money?"

"That depends," Mr. Stevens said. "If they are only 'called' your guardians, the court, if the case were decided in your favour, would appoint some one to look after you and your money; you would be a ward of the court, and the court takes very great care of its wards and looks after them in a manner not always permitted to parents nowadays. If, on the other hand, your cousins are legally appointed your guardians, they would, until you were twenty-one, have the control of your property, applying it solely for your benefit and allowing you a certain amount for your use. But, remember, they could not do as they chose with it, for they could be called upon to give a very exact account of their proceedings."

Bill breathed a sigh of relief. "That's all right," she said. "Polly and Theresa, more especially Polly, are set down in Aunt Isabel's will as my guardians; I should be able to manage if I got the money."

"They would not allow you more than a comparatively small sum; you could not touch any great amount. I don't fancy you would be much better

off than under the court if you wanted to do anything foolish, unless of course, the folly took the form of an unwise marriage, when you certainly would have more liberty if you were not a ward of the court."

Bill laughed softly. "I will tell you what I will do if I get the money," she said. "I shall give Polly so much a year for the rest of her life; she deserves it and I would give her as much as I could afford; and with the rest I should do what I liked. We should arrange it somehow; Polly would do as I told her. There is time at least to try to find some way of doing it legally, but if I could not find one I don't see that it would so very much matter, because Polly would be the person who did wrong according to the law and I should be the person who suffered wrong, and consequently the one who ought to have her up when I was old enough. As the case would really be the other way round, I should not have her up, and she could not have me up, so it would be all right."

"Oh," Mr. Stevens remarked drily, "that is how you think you will arrange matters, is it? It strikes me you are a worthy granddaughter of Wilhelmina the wilful. I fancy though you will find more obstacles than you bargain for in this little game; where, for instance, does the other cousin and guardian come in?"

"I should have to explain to Theresa that it was right. You would think it so if you knew. Theresa will always do what she thinks right, and Polly will do what she is made to do. To get your own way is mostly a matter of time."

"This time I should not be surprised if it took you till one-and-twenty. Law is not so easy to play with as you think; and cases of this sort are not so easy to win either, neither are they settled in a hurry."

Bill was prepared for that. "How long do you think it would take?" she asked. "A year?"

"Probably; it might be longer, or it might, if you have very good luck and few difficulties, be a little shorter."

"Would it cost a great deal?"

"It could not be done for nothing."

"Would a hundred pounds be any good to start with?"

"It would be excellent."

Bill put her hand into her pocket and drew out the diamond buckles: "I don't know what they are worth," she said as she placed them before the astonished lawyer, "but at least a hundred pounds; more than that I expect."

"Where did you get them?" Mr. Stevens had taken one to the window and glanced from it to the girl.

"Old Mr. Harborough gave them to me before he died."

"What!" The lawyer lost all interest in the buckles and stood staring at their owner, wondering what new surprise this granddaughter of the Corbys was going to develop.

"Mr. Harborough gave them to me," she repeated. "They are my very own; young Mr. Harborough was there at the time they were given, and he said they were my own and no one could take them away. I did mean to keep them for another purpose, but I believe it would be more right to use them for this."

"Have you any idea what these buckles are worth?"

"More than a hundred pounds," Bill said readily; "they will do to begin the case, won't they?"

"It is altogether extraordinary," the lawyer muttered, and began to wrap the buckles in paper with the resigned air of one who gives up a problem.

He offered the parcel to Bill but she put her hands behind her back;

"I want you to keep them," she said, "and begin at once."

It was perhaps as well that Mr. Stevens was not busy that afternoon, for he found there were several more points to be explained to his young client, among others that she herself could not bring an action or give directions for legal proceedings. This difficulty she disposed of by undertaking to arrange matters with Polly within two days. Another point the good man had to explain was that no one would undertake the case without first knowing a great deal more about it. This the indefatigable Bill met with a promise to send the oak box to him by an early train the next morning, and to set to work at once to find out any and every detail she could concerning the first Wilhelmina. When at last Mr. Stevens, again handing her the buckles, told her that her method of payment was not according to custom, she was still not nonplussed. "Shall I get them sold," she asked, "and give you the money?"

"Certainly not; don't attempt to sell them. And listen to me: I should not in any circumstances undertake this business for you; I will examine the contents of the box if you like, and tell you how I think you stand; but I would not undertake the case, which is completely out of my range. I am a country lawyer with quite as much country work as I can do; I am not a very young man, not a very poor one, and not at all an ambitious one. I have neither the time nor the inclination for such a piece of work as this."

"But you could find someone who would do it?" Bill asked, not in the least impressed by the gravity of his manner.

"I suppose I could," he said, smiling in spite of himself. "But even if I were to find someone, and there really was something for that some-

one to do, you must see that there are a good many things to settle before it comes to terms. When, and if, it does your cousin is the proper person to be consulted."

But Bill did not agree with him there. She pointed out that the affair was hers and the buckles hers; still she conceded that Polly could be talked to, and, since he wished it, she would take the buckles back to town. She put them in her pocket again to the no small uneasiness of Mr. Stevens, although, as she herself said, they were too big to drop out, and no one would expect to find anything of value in her pocket.

She was about to leave, by no means dissatisfied with the interview, when Mr. Stevens made a remark which caused her to pause. After saying that she must not make sure of her position, and that he himself could give her no hope until he had examined the contents of the oak box, he concluded: "And even if everything else proves satisfactory, it is quite possible you will come to grief over the matter of the divorce; the other side would be sure to make the most of that; it will have to be gone into very thoroughly."

Bill stopped on the threshold. "Do you mean," she asked, "that you will have to go into it thoroughly, or that it will have to be done in public?"

"I should not have much to do with it, but both your lawyers and those on the opposite side would have plenty; it is a point on which a good deal might turn."

"I had not thought of that," and Bill's face clouded.

"You had better think of it," the lawyer said, "for it will certainly arise. You must be sure, and the other side would insist on being sure, that there was a divorce; they would want the date of it and the date of

the second marriage and the date of the birth of the child."

"Will they want the name of the first husband?"

"Certainly."

"Will it be published in the papers?"

"It would probably figure in the reports of the case."

"Then I am not at all sure the case can ever come off," Bill said to Mr. Stevens's great astonishment.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because the first husband is alive, and I would not hurt him for all the world."

Mr. Stevens regarded this as a matter of sentiment, but a sentiment he could honour, though he hardly knew how to advise. "Well," he said at last, "you need not, and indeed cannot, do anything for a long time. I will look over your papers and tell you how I think you stand, and by that time you will have been able to decide what you wish to do."

But this was not Bill's manner of going to work at all. "Thank you very much," she said, "but I think I must decide sooner than that. When does the last up-train leave for London? Eight o'clock, is it? Thank you, I will decide before that. Perhaps I had better not come to see you so late; I will write from town."

"My dear young lady," the lawyer said, moved by the gravity of her face and manner, "there is no need to take the matter so seriously, or to do anything in such a hurry. Send me the box, and afterwards we will talk over what can be done."

But though Bill again thanked him, not disagreeing with him this time, he was not at all sure that he had convinced her.

"It's a pity if she drops it," he meditated as he watched her go down

the street. "She would win if she went in, somehow—and probably do precisely what she pleased with her fortune when she got it. She is the kind that does; she would bamboozle the Court of Chancery and dance through an Act of Parliament."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE waiting-room of a railway-station is not usually selected as the best place in which to think seriously over a matter of perplexity. But if the waiting-room be attached to the station at a very small country town where trains are infrequent and passengers few, a worse place might be chosen; it has at least the merit of freedom from friendly advice. Moreover the fact of a person sitting there doing absolutely nothing for an hour or more creates no surprise, as it is to be presumed he is only waiting for the next train. On the January afternoon of Bill's visit to Wrugglesby she found the waiting-room an admirable place for quiet thought. When she left Mr. Stevens's office she went straight to the station and, sitting down with her back to the window, tried to think over the difficulties suggested by the lawyer's words.

The difficulties resolved themselves into one and one only,—Mr. Dane. The other obstacles to the success of her undertaking might or might not prove insurmountable; at any rate Bill would face them undauntedly with a light heart and a clear conscience. But Mr. Dane was another matter; she could not wilfully, and with her eyes open, do what she felt sure would give him pain; and yet,—how could she give up this enterprise?

At this point two stout women entered the waiting-room. They were going to Darvel by the next down train in some twenty minutes' time,

and had walked in three miles from a neighbouring village; when one walks three miles the balance of a spare half-hour is not much to allow for catching a train. They were in "nice time," they told each other, though they seemed flustered and annoyed when they found the booking-office still closed. Bill heard what they said without understanding, just as she saw them without perceiving; she sat looking straight before her though her true gaze was inwards. They glanced at her once or twice. "A natural, poor thing," was the conclusion they came to. "They didn't oughter let her be about alone like that," was their final opinion as she rose from her seat and walked out of the waiting-room.

Bill left the station, turned out of the main street, and took the road to Ashelton. She had decided what to do: she would go to Mr. Dane, not to ask his permission to claim her connection with the Corby family and consequently to drag him and his past before the eyes of his neighbours, but to tell him her story and ask his advice. She loved him so well that she felt sure he would give his advice without prejudice; she was absolutely certain that he would not misunderstand or misjudge. She started on her walk with a comparatively quiet mind, not an absolutely quiet one for she knew she must give a full confidence or none at all. She must tell all, even including that which concerned Kit Harborough, and the dream which was a dream no more.

At first Bill thought of nothing but what she had to tell, but bit by bit the solitude of the road and the exhilaration of the exercise soothed her so that she thought no more. Six miles of lonely road, a level country wide spread and bare on either hand, a silent wintry afternoon with the suggestion of twilight

gathering before the village was reached,—what more could one ask to minister to a mind diseased? Nothing, in Bill's opinion, as she walked the six miles in something under an hour and a half, without a single doubt of her ability to walk them back again after dark and her pleasure in doing it.

But she did not walk those six miles back: the proprietor of the White Horse at Ashelton received a request during the evening for the little cart and old pony for Mr. Dane. And it is to be presumed he drove Bill to Wrugglesby in time for the eight o'clock train, for some sort of vehicle brought her to the station in time for that train, and a little after eight o'clock Mr. Dane rang at the private house of Stevens the lawyer.

Mrs. Stevens wanted very much to know what had brought Mr. Dane to see her husband at that time in the evening. She had a great opinion of Mr. Dane, of whom she knew little, and of his Family (with a capital F), of which she knew less. She and Mr. Johnson had conferred more than once on the subject of the relative who was a lord and the other relative who was a bishop, and the mystery why Mr. Dane himself was—if not a bishop or a lord—at least something more than a country parson. On that particular evening, after Mr. Dane had left, Mrs. Stevens naturally wished to know the reason of his visit; first she sought indirectly for information and learned nothing; then she asked boldly what had brought him there that night.

"A small pony-cart, my dear," Mr. Stevens said amiably; "and the same vehicle has taken him away again. I hope he will reach his destination safely, for he is not as young as he was and the night is dark, though the pony, I must admit, looks a safe beast."

Mrs. Stevens, being somewhat annoyed by this answer, condescended to no more questions and maintained a dignified silence for the rest of the evening,—a proceeding which it is to be feared did not greatly trouble Mr. Stevens, since he was so completely engrossed in his own meditations that he was not aware of it. After Mrs. Stevens had gone to bed he poked the fire into a blaze and observed to the crackling coals: "You were a fool, Wilhelmina the first, a fool! You threw away a very fine and noble gentleman for your gipsy lover." And being a country lawyer of somewhat prosaic practice, and being also a man of genial sympathies, he once more gave himself up to meditations on the story which had been told him that night.

And Mr. Dane, having reached home in safety, also thought a little of the story which had been revived that night. But not for long; he resolutely put it away from him as he put away the diamond buckles Bill had left. She had left them on purpose and with a definite understanding. "You must keep them, Monseigneur," she said. "I can reclaim them, if I ever have the money, and if you do not sell them before. I cannot have you undertake this great thing for me unless you will have them as a sort of guarantee; I would rather you kept them; it is better so." So he kept them, for after he had seen how she carried them loose in her pocket and heard how she kept them in a hole in the kitchen-wall, he also thought that it was better so.

Bill went back to London without her buckles, but Polly was not aware of the fact. Indeed Polly did not hear anything much about the visit to Wrugglesby that evening, for Bill did not reach home till late, too late to tell all about it, she said, and put

off the explanation till the next day when she promised to tell Polly everything. Bella was rather disappointed by this arrangement for she would be out then,—at the dressmaker's in the morning and at Mrs. James Brownlow's in the afternoon. It must be admitted that, fond as Bill was of her cousin, Bella's absence suited her well, for she wanted to have a long and somewhat difficult talk with Polly.

Bella went out early, and early also went the little oak box by rail to Wrugglesby, carefully addressed and properly insured as Mr. Stevens had impressed upon Bill it must be. Before it went she pulled off the chintz cover from the top and took one thing from the inside; not a document or deed, or even one of her mother's recipes, only a fossil sea-urchin found on the beach at Bymouth on a sweet September morning. She hid it away among her linen; then she nailed down the lid of the box, tied a rope round it, and sent it away.

Polly did not know it had gone until later when Bill told her in the course of their talk. This talk did not prove so difficult as Bill had anticipated, for Polly was quick to grasp the possibilities of the case. It was true, Bill had acted without her consent and in a measure outraged her in her part of guardian; but Polly was not always playing that part, and she was, as the late Mr. Brownlow had said, a capital woman of business; when it came to plain facts apart from appearances, Bill's conduct and communication wore a very different aspect. As Polly said: "You risk nothing; even if you lose you are no worse off than you were except for those diamond buckles—" (here, in spite of a previous and very eloquent statement of her opinion of Bill's giving them up, Polly could not forbear from making a short digres-

sion and recapitulation of her sentiments)—"except for those buckles, you lose nothing since Mr. Dane is going to advance the money and take all the trouble. You are quite sure he means you only to pay if you win! You lose nothing if you fail and if you succeed—well!"

The prospect seemed almost too much for Polly, and Bill forebore to mention any of her own plans regarding the money, should she win it. Polly, of course, had something to say about the way in which she had not been consulted, though not much, for, as she admitted, Bill "had done very well;" moreover, she was somewhat mollified by the nominal share in future transactions which Bill assured her would be hers. Bill explained matters as clearly as she could to Polly's great satisfaction and sufficient enlightenment. In a matter of this sort Polly was quick to grasp the essential points, and in a matter of any sort even quicker to accommodate herself to the part she was to play. There was one thing, however, which Polly did not understand, and which Bill would not explain,—the reason that had induced Mr. Dane to follow such an extraordinary course as he had, and not only to give his sanction to the proceedings but also to lend active and financial assistance.

"I can't tell you," was all Bill would say; "you would not understand. I hardly know myself and I certainly can't explain. I can't talk about him, he is,—he is too good."

Polly was not satisfied, but she could get no other explanation, and when Bill left her after some rather able though unsuccessful cross-examination, she hurled after her as a parting shot: "It is a very peculiar thing, Bill, very peculiar indeed, the way in which elderly gentlemen do things for you. One gives you a pair

of diamond buckles, and another is undertaking a law-case for you. It is most peculiar, not to put too fine a point upon it,—most peculiar !”

And though Polly went to the kitchen-door and raised her voice so that Bill who had gone up-stairs should not lose any of the remark, she still contrived to throw a vast deal of meaning into the last words and the sniff which followed them. But Bill, if she heard, did not answer, which was wise ; and Polly, who was too satisfied with the results of Bill's “peculiarity” to trouble very much about explanations, went back to her work and asked no more unanswerable questions.

Bella and Theresa had to be taken into confidence of course, but neither of them thought the matter so important as Bill and Polly did. It was interesting to know all about Bill's people, but the substantial benefits to be reaped from it seemed uncertain and shadowy. “It was all rather improbable and unwise,” Theresa said, while Bella, being full of her own concerns, hardly understood what was being discussed ; and both sisters entirely failed to realise the value of success should it ever be attained.

“They are so stupid,” Polly once said impatiently ; “they don't grasp anything out of their own groove. I've no patience with either of them ; they are thorough Brownlows, without an ounce of vitality between them. They're all right so long as you put them in ordinary circumstances,—a decent house with a decent servant, decent meals at regular hours, and a decent husband to come home at regular times and provide the money. But as for striking out a line for themselves, or saving a situation, or doing or even understanding anything which is out of their ordinary rut or wants a small amount of enterprise, they simply can't do it !”

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Bill laughed a little, though she could not deny the truth of at least part of the indictment. She could not deny to herself either that this same characteristic of the sisters made it easier for her to carry through, unquestioned and undisturbed, the enterprises which they could neither undertake nor understand. However, she did not remark on this to Polly, but merely said : “I think Bella and T. are both rather occupied with their own concerns just now.”

Polly would not allow this excuse to Theresa, though she admitted it might hold good for Bella whose wedding-day was so near. Bella's wedding occupied all their minds about this time, Polly being determined that it should be of suitable though quiet magnificence. “Of course we are still in mourning,” she said, “or at least we can reckon we are ; Aunt was almost like a mother to us, besides an out of mourning wedding would cost so much. As it is, we can make a very good show indeed at a reasonable price. And I mean to do it too, Bill ; we are quite as good as the Dawsons, and I'm not going to let them think we are not.” And Polly made all the preparations in her power ; her chief cause of trouble being that, since Bella was to be married at Ashelton, she herself could not be at the base of operations very long beforehand.

Bella left town early in February, in the company of Jack who had come to town on business. When Polly heard of his coming she regretted that she could not offer him the hospitality she had offered Gilchrist, but her house was too full now to allow of it. However, Jack came to see them and stopped some time and was, as Polly said, “as pleasant as possible and quite different from Mr. Gilchrist Harborough.” Indeed, Jack, instead of disapproving of Bill's working, in-

sisted on helping her to clear the table, making much fun over it. He always seemed to regard Bill as a jolly little school-girl not to be taken seriously; that day he teased her about the apples she took to eat in the train on her journey to Bymouth. Bill told him they were Polly's, but he would not believe her, and they laughed over it for some time. Later on, however, she became serious and asked him some questions about the Harborough lawsuit. Of late Jack had become somewhat intimate with Gilchrist; Bill had gathered this from Bella's talk, and thinking that, if anyone could tell her of the present condition of the Harborough case, Jack could, she questioned him on it.

"Why, Lady of Law," he exclaimed when he found out how much she knew of the original claim, "you seem to know a good deal about it already!"

"Yes, I heard all about that part," she told him; and he remembered that Gilchrist had been very often to Haylands during the summer, so often that he had once thought there was some sort of an understanding between Bill and the Australian, though latterly he had begun to doubt it. "I am afraid," he said, thinking her interest in the case was on Gilchrist's account, "I am afraid your friend won't get this affair settled in a hurry; there seem to be a hundred and one things to prove."

"Yes? What? Tell me."

He smiled at her earnestness. "Let me see," he said, "what shall I tell you? I have heard about it no end of times, but I am not so very much the wiser and I'm sure you won't be; still, here goes. The lawyers now, I believe, are busy trying to find out whether this precious rule of the youngest son inheriting applies to sons only, or whether it can be

extended to other relations when the sons give out."

"Can't it? I should have thought it could."

"Ah, but you're not a lawyer; lawyers don't think, they prove. They say sometimes the extension is allowed and sometimes it is not, according to early arrangement or tradition or something; they have got to find out how the first Harborough had his affairs arranged. Then another question they are busy about is how much old Harborough knew of the existence of another claimant, and I don't see how they are ever to discover that in the circumstances. Things are rather mixed altogether; for instance, your friend's father was born in 1845, old Harborough came into the property that same year, and that year also there died his youngest brother, the one who should have had the property,—that is what I call indecently crowding events to no purpose. Then the old man's will seems likely to prove another bone of contention,—whether he had a right to make a will, why he made it, whether he believed his position insecure and made it to strengthen it, or whether he thought it secure and made it in good faith,—oh, it is a lovely tangle I can tell you! Harborough has talked to me about it till I have completely forgotten which party wants to prove what, and have got so mixed myself that I have gone home deciding to sow estates-tail in the home-field, drain the pond and turn it into an estate in fee simple to settle on my bonny bride."

He drew Bella's hand into his own as he spoke, and it was easy to see from their faces that there would be no more discussion of the Harborough case for the present. But Bill could not forbear asking one last question: "I suppose it will take a long time to settle?"

"Years! You'll have time to grow up twice over before they are done squabbling, and Bella will be a staid and sober matron by the time the decision is given."

Bella combated this opinion, not because she doubted the length of the Harborough lawsuit but because she vowed she never would be staid and sober. A conversation natural to the circumstances ensued, and lasted until Jack and Bella left the house together.

It was of course quite out of the question for both Bill and Polly to attend Bella's wedding, as they could not leave the house to take care of itself, so it had been arranged for Bill to stay and Polly to go. It was really important that she should be present at the function, if for no other reason than her own belief that Bella and Theresa would not be equal to the situation and the Dawson family in its strength. "They would never manage without me," Polly said with conviction. "I shall go down a day or two beforehand,—I really must, to see after things. You can do here quite as well as I can, and no one need know you are alone; I am not afraid to trust you, as I know you can take very good care of yourself and the house."

To this Bill agreed. "Of course I shall be all right," she said. "You had better stay as long as Bella and Theresa want you."

But Polly had decided not to remain after the wedding. "There will be no need for me to do that," she said. "I shall go several days before to see that everything is arranged properly and I shall come back directly after. Or,—no, on second thoughts, I think it had better be the day after; it would perhaps be nicer if I waited till the day after, as there will be such a lot of clearing up to do."

Bill heard this last decision with a

smile, she knew that Polly's "clearing up" would mean a substantial hamper-shaped addition to her luggage. But she said nothing, as she knew Theresa would not mind, and Polly fulfilled her plan exactly. She went to Wruglesby three days before the wedding with the most wonderful costume that even her ingenuity had ever compassed, safely packed in a cardboard box and placed on the seat beside her.

Polly's work, and she certainly did work during those three days, was not in vain. Bella's wedding was in every way successful. The Dawson family was properly impressed with the desirability of the new connection; Mrs. Dawson was almost satisfied, and Miss Gladys Dawson charmingly (and unpleasantly) put in her place by the presiding genius. Polly really was in her element that day and showed to the best advantage. Mrs. Stevens was warm in her praises, and even Gilchrist Harborough, who was there more as the bridegroom's friend than the bride's, thought that his former opinion of Miss Haines had been unjust.

"It really was as nice a wedding as I have ever seen," was Miss Gruet's opinion, and in the main Ashelton agreed with her, finding in the event a delightful subject of conversation during the lengthening days.

"It is quite *the* event of the spring," Miss Minchin said gaily. So it was in Ashelton, and beyond Ashelton the ladies did not take very much account.

Beyond Ashelton, at the little house at Bayswater, there was another event, and one of such interest to those concerned that even Polly for a time regarded Bella's wedding as of secondary importance. Mr. Stevens had examined the contents of Bill's box and found that the deed dated 1799 was indeed the counterpart of the lease granted by Roger Corby in the year that Peter Harborough was

shot. Mr. Dane, acting upon this information, had been to a certain old established firm of solicitors in London and had seen the senior partner. He was not the man who, something more than forty years ago, had helped to cut the bond Wilhelmina Corby had tried to break for herself; nevertheless he soon knew all about it, for it was recorded in the annals of the firm and only needed to be looked up. Looked up it accordingly was, together with other events, dates, and certificates; and the lease and the information and everything else there was to place were placed in the hands of this lawyer who, at Mr. Dane's request, undertook the case Mr. Stevens had refused. Altogether, what with one thing and another, things were progressing surprisingly well, and Polly and Bill had good reason to congratulate themselves.

Before the spring was over Mr.

Briant of Sandover felt the consequences of the energy and inquiry Bill had provoked, for he received the most unwelcome intelligence that a descendant of the Corbys existed and claimed, in a purely legal and formal manner, a large piece of his valuable Sandover estate. He did not believe the claim genuine; and then he did not believe it could be substantiated; and in any case he was, if possible, going to contest it, for he had always believed there were no legitimate descendants of the Corbys left.

"It rains lawsuits," he grumbled once; "before Kit Harborough is through with his trouble I am let in for one. Although," so he added to a friend, "between you and me, I should be glad to see the boy clear of his business half as well as I shall be of Mary Ann Haines, guardian of somebody Corby's granddaughter."

(To be continued.)

GODS AND LITTLE FISHES.

It may doubtless be better to be a little living fish than a big dead god; but at any rate it is a fine thing to be a god and have your sport in the deep. Glad are the gods always for the little fishes. Life to some of us without them would be vanity; to others they spell not sport, but life or death. The common herring, the vulgar sprat, hawked, three for a penny in noisome boxes, are arbiters of weal or woe to many a snug houseful, and in their maws hold poverty or wealth. But you have to see them in their native element before you can understand this.

It was for this the Minister's landlady was busy buttering her thickest biscuits while the Minister was upstairs looking out an old jersey, relic of fishing-days in an Iona cobble in these careless college vacations ere yet parishes had power to trouble. She tore a piece from *THE SCOTSMAN*,—the Minister had but two idols, his paper and his pipe—and wrapped up the provender in her own kindly canny fashion, while the Minister came tripping down the stair, his eyes shining, whistling *THE GLENDARUEL HIGHLANDERS*, a certain proof of elation with him.

"You see," he explained gravely as he saw my raised eyebrows, "I have been out often enough with the drift-net but never with the trawl."

"Oh yes," said I, and pretended to understand; though why a man should grow excited at the prospect of a trawl while the thought of the drift leaves him perfectly calm, is beyond me. The truth is, once the

salt sea has stung your blood and you have been to the killing of the fish, not even age and infirmity can keep you from the trade, drift, trawl, or line. Even a dounce minister will be wildly excited over a good catch. Once a fisher, always a fisher.

"Come on then and let's not keep the men waiting. The boats from the head of the loch are away this while."

The harbour was full of brown sails, and boats were moving as we drew near. Time and tide and fish wait on no man, not even on a minister; and had the *WELCOME HOME*! been standing down channel now, we had known better than to grumble.

"Ha, there she lies," exclaimed the Minister, who had been anxiously scanning the craft. "She's at anchor and not a soul aboard."

And sure enough when we rounded the breast-wall, behold our crew easily dispersed on herring-boxes, with backs rounded, elbows planted on knees, legs up to chins. What mastery of the sweet art of lounging lies in these great slack frames, coiled so loosely into the laziest of postures! See your coast fisherman as he leans his folded arms on the harbour-wall or stretches his legs on the warm grass at the quay-head; no professional tramp could lounge it more genuinely.

A lazy calling, is it, wise and gentle tourist, loftily eyeing the recumbent figure from your cushioned seat? The cat is lazy enough when she basks in the sun,—but see puss after her mouse. Put your loafing lazy fisherman into his skiff, get the nets in and the sails up,—and you

will see industry, energy, keenness, aye and even nimbleness, of the rarest kind. Once aboard, the clumsiest figure there will wake into strenuous life. Your lazy, lounging, lubberly fisherman is out moiling and sweating by night when you are snug abed, and thinks himself lucky if he has not to sit mending his nets all day into the bargain.

"Hullo, Mitchell," cried the Minister to a big fellow passing with an enormous armful of provender, "are you stocking an ironclad?"

A broad smile of delight was the sole answer. These grand fellows, it is plain, like a word from the pastor; no flippant jesters at life are these, but serious, deep-thinking Celts, men with the religious cast of spirit. Not that they have no humour,—far from it; but humour is one thing and a serious; ribald flip and jest are another.

"There's a couple of Jonahs to-night," laughed our Skipper from his herring-box, a great, black-faced fellow with a chest like a bull. "Did you ever hear, sir, of the minister on the east coast? If he only takes a squint at the boats when they are going oot, there's not a fish for them that night!"

The group shook with deep-chested, silent laughter.

"Put us overboard, then," said the Minister, "and let us drown."

At this there was another laugh of the same noiseless kind.

"No fears, sir," put in the irrepressible Johnstone,—he was the recognised wag—"a Jonah'll no droon." On this followed more laughter. "Besides there's a whale aboot the noo!" And again came the silent chorus.

'Twas poor enough jesting, I grant you, for a drawing-room; but with ten men in an overloaded punt, its gunwale just lipping the water and taking it in at a dozen places, quite as lively as there is any need for.

We are the last of the boats, but there is no sign of haste. Everything is done with a fine leisure that comes of confident skill. The Minister takes the helm with acclamation, and there is manifest delight when he gets the boat out of harbour with full sails and cuts well to windward of *THE SAUCY LASS*.

"You're doin' fine," comments the Skipper approvingly, eyeing the widening gap. The others affect not to see the humiliated boat, but they know its position to an inch and have an innuendo ready for its helmsman next day.

"There was a whale," says Johnstone slowly and impressively if inconsecutively, "doon by the Mull Dhu this mornin'; but I'm dootin' he's awa up the loch noo."

There was a general stir at this which showed that all minds had been busy with the problem of destination.

"Is that the MacGregors puttin' aboot?" asked the Skipper.

"It's just them. They'll be for up the loch."

"Put her round, sir; that's right! A wee bit more on the wind; you'll do!"

Away we went on a dancing sea, the falling sun throwing its scarlet and gold athwart the waves behind us. A boat standing south was caught in the glow and sheeted with flame. An otter flashed up between us and the west, its coat strewn with diamonds. A long, black snout suddenly pushed along above water over our bow.

"There he is now, boys! He's workin' north. We'll do yet, boys," shouted Johnstone cheerily.

In the long run up the loch we had time to talk theology. There seemed to prevail a general suspicion of Popery, and a venerable Principal, boasting descent from the Covenanters, was frankly pointed at. "He's the

boy," said Johnstone warmly, of a certain notorious defender of the faith and a thorn in the flesh to all Ritualists. The Skipper, an elder of the Kirk, listened gravely and seemed to agree. The discussion was interrupted by the anchor going down, MacBride at the bow being a silent man and a practical creature thinking of supper. The funnel was put in, the fire lit, and tea made in a kettle. Cups were displaced by porridge-bowls, slices of tongue were served up in soup-plates, and we suppered sumptuously on thick bread and butter, the cook complacently receiving compliments. Out in that superb air everything tasted superbly.

The unwritten but unbroken law of the herring-fishing is that the fishing shall not begin till the sun has gone an hour; and religiously we sat till the full time had lapsed.

"On with your breeks," cried the Minister, pocketing his watch; "up anchor!"

He had assumed command; and as the herring-fishing is a scaly operation, I hastened to draw over my own a pair of the Minister's cast-off trousers.

"Now you're dressed," remarked Johnstone approvingly; and Neil passed me a lump of rope to gird my loins withal. "That's what we put on," he said. It went round me twice; it's not everybody has the proportions of a Loch Fyne fisherman. They themselves got their huge limbs into stiff oilskin trousers and drew on waterproof sleeves. You will find few people so careful of themselves as these big fellows. The clothing they wear is astonishing: the thickest of wool next the skin; rough home-knitted stockings up to the knees; trousers of stout well cloth; heavy sea-boots running well up the leg; blue flannel shirts of uncommon

toughness; oilskin overalls,—and this in the height of summer! I smiled at the panoply; but the night was not to be over before I should be envying them every stitch.

Now the fishing began in earnest; chaff ceased, and all grew serious. The loch was a millpond; the moon was not yet up, the water glistening with a dull oily light. We could see the black shapes of boats up and down the loch for a mile and more in this strange glimmer.

"Where'll the whale be noo?" asked Johnstone. He seemed to be the mouthpiece of the crew.

"He's awa doon sooth," said the look-out, the speechless MacBride.

"Aye, that's the way he's workin'," put in the Skipper, and his word was law.

For some time we drifted in dead silence till the Minister pointed quickly; he was an Iona man and had not lost the ear for them. "There's herring out there," he exclaimed in suppressed excitement.

At this there was a stir and eager words. "Aye, aye. But they're in the tide." "The rascals'll no come in." And Johnstone shook a foreboding head. "Was that a whale?" Something had broken up down the loch. "Naw, just a pellock."

"That's the whale noo,—there, he's at the Otter Ferry! And that's the MacGregor's boat."

Confound these MacGregors! Chips of Rob Roy they were sure enough, red as bulls, keen as eagles. They were always where the fish were; when not a boat on the loch but was clean, they had their maize. Well, it was their luck. This was the year of the Red MacGregors; last year our boat was top of the loch; so be it. The fishermen take these changes philosophically. In no race dwells a finer spirit of fellowship; if they get a haul, they say "Very

good," and go cheerily home; if a neighbour gets the fish, there is no growling. The sea is a strange mistress, and her followers are resigned to her caprices.

If you would know to what miraculous delicacy the human ear can attain, you must go to the herring-fishing. Such was the silence that one could hear one's heart beat; and yet the sounds of the deep escaped one, told one nothing. The waters were a blank mystery into which one peered with aching eyes and straining ears. The Skipper, bolt upright at the stern with both hands over his ears, was reading the scarce signs of the sea; the most imperceptible sound, movements wellnigh invisible, were full of meaning for him. He read the face of the waters as one would read a printed page.

By day any fool can tell the herring-shoal when it bursts up like a breaking wave, plain to see, and even by the sprinkled air-bubbles which mark where it rests down below. But go out by starless night when the eyes are useless, with the ear for a guide; what with the ripple of the tide on the boat, the creak of the cordage, the rattle of the tiller, the breaking of wavelets on the rock, the falling of mountain streams into the loch water, the sudden plunges of the porpoise, the dipping of the oars, the far-off sounds of anchors going down, of sails being hoisted, the cries of seabirds, echoes from the shore and the dull mists of the night, could you pick out the rising of a herring or mark the ring left by his nose? The flight of the herring-gull could tell you something by day, but at night if you are quick enough, you catch but the glimpse of a black mass swiftly passing overhead. The whale could tell you something too if you could only see him, but you are not keen enough for that, nor

indeed for anything watermen can sight at the midnight hour. You can hear the blowings of the pellock indeed; you would be stone deaf if you did not catch his lusty plunges. But the fisherman's sense is very finely drawn. A tiny bubble rising from below may even in the dark guide the look-out; the faintest plop conveys a message to his ear.

The herring were out in the tide now; but how they knew that, I could not tell. Yet there they were—gazing eagerly seawards as if marking something.

Suddenly there came a heavy splash to the north. "Mitchell's gettin' a shot." "Aye, aye; pull up, boys."

As we drew near, and the black mass began to define itself, we could hear the shaking of the net and the smiting of the surface that indicated a catch. Presently even a landsman could mark the twittering of the fish as they were tumbled into the hold; it was just like swifts on a June evening.

"How are ye doin', Colin?"

"Middlin'. Big fish here, but ill to get. The half's away."

"That's a peety, Colin."

There was nothing great here; so the boat nosed south again, a soft wind sending us gently along.

"I doot, boys," said the Skipper, "it'll need to be the theatre after all."

After I had entered this theatre and heard the diabolical, piercing, malignant screech of the sternels, I knew where Wagner got the key of his *DIE WALKÜRE*. A low island ran across a snug bay; this was the concert-hall. The island was carpeted with nests, eggs, and young of the sternel, and the air swarmed like a hailstorm with clashing, squabbling, jealous birds, fighting every inch of space, whose shrill screaming ceased not by day nor night. In the night-

fall it was maddening. You felt as if you were driven to give them back scream for scream, and entering the murderous fray, strike savagely right and left; it was a fitting background for the ravings of a Lear.

There was a good beach for fish in the bay; and my landlubber's nose was not so blunt but I caught a smell of fish in the water, though I could not tell, as our crew could, that it was the gut-herring and therefore not to be touched.

"We'll need to try the ferry, boys," said Johnstone as we swept out fishless.

"I think we will," assented the Skipper; "the whale's doon that way."

The moon was now peeping out shyly like a maid through her curtains. Up went the sail. Boats passed and repassed, all seeking the fish that would not come and be caught. There was no jealousy visible in the fleet. Information and hints were freely asked and generously given. To be sure all hailed from the one port, and I cannot say whether they would have been as free to the men of Tarbert. But here at all events, within the fleet, were no curmudgeons. The ocean herself leads the way; she is free to all her sons.

There was some rude chaff which, rough and jagged as it was, awakened no resentment.

"What are ye sailin' up an' doon for there, Dougal, like a hen lookin' for a nest? Can ye no tell us where the fish is?"

"Aye, aye, lad. The fish is here; but no what I'm wantin'."

"Maybe it's skatefish ye're lookin' for."

"Maybe it is. Have you got any thing yourself?"

"Not a haet."

At this confession there was no derision; only a deep "Aye, aye"

came across the water. Unmanly jeering is rare, save among young lads who have not ripened into the full-blown fisher; nor is the rough and ready chaff ever really malicious.

"Is that a torch up the loch?"

Northwards a light shot up in the darkness and flickered over the waters. Then another burst forth, both flaring grandly. Two green lights bore down on the signal. These were the screws to bid for the catch. A take early in the night is a coveted thing.

All eyes were turned patiently to the lights, and though the torches were up at the very place we had left, not a growl escaped their lips. A council of war was inaugurated. Otter Ferry had been drawn blank.

"Well, what is it to be now?"

"I don't know," said the Skipper.

"Will we try the Mull Dhu?"

"I'm quite agreeable," said Mac-Bride, breaking his long silence.

"All right."

A herring-boat is a democratic institution. Every man gives his opinion, and his word will be weighed impartially. The only marks of the ruler here are age and wisdom.

The Mull Dhu was three miles away, which meant some pulling to get there in good time. Our companion boat,—the trawlers work in pairs—followed us unquestioningly. It was a pocket Republic whose affairs were well managed. Given eight cool-tempered, sensible men, patient, cautious, serious, it is easy to form your ideal State on a socialistic basis. Every fishing-crew is one.

Out went the great oars unmurmuringly for the long pull. A good twelve feet they were and for size like young trees. It was now you could see where the fishermen got their brawny frames. Only a powerful man could handle these ponderous blades. The Minister took one and did not so badly; but his thews and

sinews are no ordinary things. Three pulled and one steered. They changed places automatically. In our little Republic all was done harmoniously, silently, perfectly.

It was now, when we glided under the shadow of the Mull Dhu, coming on for two in the morning. Very little of the fishing-night was left; and if we did not catch within the next hour and a half, we might go home to our beds.

Another torch up! this time too at the Otter Ferry, the very place we had rowed from so laboriously. Twice done in one night! Yet nobody spoke.

The sea was grey and ghostly now. Out there were the kelpies, stealing over the face of the waters; great undulating serpents with hideous heads crawled on the surface of the deep; gigantic vague monsters with remorseless tentacles rolled shapelessly out in the mist yonder; nameless things crept to and fro. You did not need an Ossian to spin a Celtic legend here; you felt the gloom in your very bones. The heavy masses of the hills looming black overhead, the grey water shuddering underneath, the shapes that flitted in the air or moved along the deep, the strange cries from the heart of the gloom, formed fit place for uncouth happenings. If Vanderdecken himself had sailed ghost-like out of the greyness, one would not have been afraid; it would have seemed just the right thing. The mystery indeed is why he did not glide forth.

The silent man at the bow straightened himself; he had not spoken since we left Otter Ferry. "Was that the ploutin' o' a herrin'?"

Mark that word *ploutin'*; was there ever a more expressive term? The Minister, who has an etymological weakness, says the word is *ploop*. But *ploop* or *plout*, I care

not; it is just what you do hear when the herring rises.

All ears were bent to the sound. The Skipper gave his verdict. "No, it's just troots playin' in the water. Ho, John—" this to a passing skiff—"have you got a haul to-night?"

"Not wan."

"Ach, ye'll need to play Jock Tamson."

To play Jock Tamson is to lie down to sleep in the boat till the fish come to be caught.

"It's yourself that can do that well."

"What about the time there was a boat left her nets on the Craignure shore? Was it you, John?"

"Aye, aye, it was me," said John sadly, disappearing into the vapour.

There was a quiet chuckle all round at this, in the midst of which the Minister appeared from the cabin to ask what all the noise was for.

"It's the Brochan away by. I was askin' him about the time he broke his nets."

"Is that all? I thought you had landed a load of herring."

"No, no," said Johnstone with a grin, "if there was any herrin' in't, they were frichted away."

It was at this point Neil made his first and only joke that night. "Och yes; it's no ill to hear him when he sleeps." Neil had been so silent, silenter than even the man at the bow, the remark was so quietly humorous, delivered with such sly unction and so unexpected, that the shipload of us roared, the Minister loudest of all. Neil himself shook with silent laughter for the next half hour.

"Has anything been got to-night?" asked the Minister after a bit.

"No much, sir. The Lion's awa' doon sooth by the point there. They say he has a shot." The veracity of their epithets was unerring. The Lion was a truly leonine man.

"I think we'll be shiftin' home now. There's the mornin' comin'."

And to be sure, day was breaking in the north-east and the clouds opening. Away home we went, not doleful, but chastened into subdued cheerfulness. It takes a lot to break a fisherman's heart.

When the last dusk of night was leaving the Mull Dhu, we passed a cove where an old man and a lad in a tarred boat were taking in a net wherein struggled a few silvery fish.

"Mackerel, Peter?" was the cry.

"Aye, aye," came the deep-voiced answer. Old as the man was, the voice was strong as ever. There are white-headed men out in the herring-boats every night and as keen as the young ones.

"He'll need to be quicker than that if he's to catch the IONA."

Mackerel are very ill to take out of the net; they are slippery and have a sharp back fin. It was after five when we pulled slowly into the

bay. Peter was not in till six, and the steamer was away.

"Better luck next time, lads."

"Aye, aye, sir."

No tears were shed over the absence of fish. There might be plenty next night; if not next night, then the next. Hope springs eternal in the fisher's breast. And underneath all is a sturdy fatalism: what use in quarrelling with the inevitable?

The Tarbert men win all the sailing races on the loch.

"How is it," I asked a young fisherman, "you let the Tarbert men beat you?"

"Och sure, the Tarbert men has the best boats."

That was it,—the Tarbert men had the best boats. What more could be said? Nothing could touch that fact. And when we gods came home that morning without the little fishes, I said to myself, "The Tarbert men has the best boats." And it comforted me.

J. SCOLAR THOMSON.

THE ST. LOUIS OF "THE CRISIS."

WHILE coming under the class of fiction, Mr. Churchill's recent novel bases itself frankly upon fact, and makes an exact and detailed use of it. Many, who are but little attracted to him as an original creator, have been fascinated with the story because of its intense realism. *THE CRISIS* is a close study of St. Louis as it existed before and during the Civil War. There are few romances which prepare the reader better for the study of actual memoirs. Take, for instance, General Sherman's two volumes of *Memoirs*, and you will find that, where the *Memoirs* and *THE CRISIS* deal with similar things, they are in almost exact correspondence.

The city where Generals Hancock and Grant found their wives, where General Sherman was a familiar figure for many years and where he lies buried, where General Frémont organised the Western Sanitary Commission, is surely of considerable importance to the student of United States' history. In a critical period it held a cardinal place. Not two hundred miles off is Springfield, Illinois, where Lincoln made his reputation, whence he was called to be President of the United States, and whither he was brought to be buried. Mr. Churchill was well-advised when he took St. Louis and its surroundings as the stage on which the events of his story should happen. It was the place where he lived as a boy, and attended school; and among the elderly gentlemen with whom he was privileged to associate, were several who had played auspicious parts in the war, and had seen

Lincoln and Sherman at highly critical moments. For future historians of the war *THE CRISIS* will remain a valuable book because it contains sketches of the leading actors as they had actually appeared to men of the time who were eminently fitted to judge them, and who gave their impressions in an off-hand way to an eager boy fond of hero-making. There are many vivid and diversified conversations at the back of *THE CRISIS* and its construction. It is reproductive as much as creative.

To come to Mr. Churchill's method: Thackeray is patently his master, in whose steps he diligently essays to follow. Paying minute attention to locality, and introducing as subordinate characters men who were and are in everyone's mouth, he draws a picture of a past period, in which the incidents are threaded like beads on the string of a family history. Colonial and revolutionary times he interpreted through the Carvel family of Virginia; the time of civil war he has interpreted through the St. Louis merchant, Comyn Carvel, a lineal descendant of his earlier hero. Here again he follows Thackeray's hereditary method.

At the time the story opens, in the early Fifties, there was a Southern gentleman in St. Louis, engaged in general business not far from the levee, a widower with a daughter. Mr. James E. Yeatman, son of Thomas Yeatman, a merchant and banker of Nashville, Tennessee, came to St. Louis in 1842, when he had barely passed his majority, and engaged in a general business at Second

and Morgan Streets, in a building still standing. This is the gentleman to whom Mr. Churchill dedicated RICHARD CARVEL, in the following appreciative terms: "To James E. Yeatman, of Saint Louis, an American gentleman whose life is an example to his countrymen." Until 1857 the firm of Yeatman and Robinson continued to carry on business, but it failed to weather the financial crisis of that year. Mr. Yeatman's first wife was Miss Alicia Thompson, of Virginia, and their daughter Alice is still living at Glencoe, a suburban resort about twenty-five miles to the south of the city, which comes frequently into the pages of the story. He owned property in the neighbourhood, and a station on the Missouri Pacific railroad, called Yeatman, bears witness to the fact.

Mr. Yeatman, having early lost his first wife, took for his second partner in life, Cynthia Pope, sister of the general who was expected in 1861 to do great things for the cause of the Union, but whose career was brought to a close by the untoward results of the second battle of Bull Run. The house to which Yeatman brought his wife still stands on the bluff, above what was the old Bellefontaine Road, overlooking meadow-lands that stretch to the big Mississippi river. These lands, once green and decked with flowers, are now disfigured by factories, elevators, and other unsightly constructions. The house, then known as Belmont, now bears the name of the Eddy House, and stands at the corner of Penrose and Eleventh Streets.

Cynthia Yeatman's sister Penelope had been married, early in the Thirties, to a rising young lawyer, Beverley Allen, a Virginian, who had graduated at Princeton, and gone west to push his fortunes. He built a country

house on a bluff a little further to the north than Belmont, and this house is the Bellegarde of *THE CRISIS*. Mrs. Allen's married life lasted but eleven years. In 1845 her husband, who had been visiting Europe, was carried off by cholera at New York. She still survives, in a hale old age.

There were three girls in the Allen family, who were brought up to love and reverence their Uncle Yeatman as a second father. Never was a man more worthy of respect, and never was it more completely given. Always a lover of children, Mr. Yeatman was an ideal of amiability and goodness to his three daughters. One of them, "Puss" Allen as she was called by her intimates, became Mrs. Hall, and the mother of Mabel Hall, now Mrs. Winston Churchill. Another became Mrs. Sturgeon, who now resides in the old house on the bluff. A third, Mrs. Orrick, lives with her mother in the Allens' city residence in Washington and Spring Avenues.

Death came into the families again in 1854, removing Mrs. Yeatman. Her husband gave up a separate suburban establishment and joined forces with his widowed sister-in-law. He was thenceforth intimately associated with the Beverley Allen house. The spacious north-east room became his library, and, as he was an inveterate reader, his constant haunt. Here his body lay on July 8th, when his many friends came to bid him a last farewell and accompany him to the neighbouring cemetery.

Mr. Yeatman, however, is not the Comyn Carvel of the tale, although he furnished material for the description of the character and its surroundings. He is essentially Calvin Brinsmade, the banker, whose town-house was in Olive Street, who attended the Presbyterian church, and who, during the Civil War

became head of the Western Sanitary Commission.

A few years after the dissolution of the firm of Yeatman and Robinson, Mr. Yeatman identified himself with the Merchants' Bank, which he had been instrumental in founding some years previously. Its first location was at the north-west corner of Main and Locust Streets in a building still standing. Afterwards it was moved two blocks west to the north-west corner of Third and Locust Streets, and occupied a building now undergoing a thorough reconstruction; and finally it became the Merchants' Laclede, on the ground floor of the Laclede Building at the corner of Fourth and Olive Streets. For over thirty years Mr. Yeatman was its president.

His town house was in Olive Street, west of Tenth Street, where he owned so many houses on the south side of the street that the place was known as Yeatman's Row. The Row has long ceased to contain residences, and is now given up mostly to piano and furniture stores. The chapter, then, in the first book of *THE CRISIS*, entitled "The Little House," comes as close as possible to reality. A visitor to St. Louis in the Fifties, anxious to find a convenient house, would naturally have applied to a benevolent gentleman with Washington-like nose, who owned several houses in Olive Street, and himself lived in one of them.

The great glory of Mr. Yeatman's career was the prominent and efficient part he took in the organization and practical working of the Western Sanitary Commission, established in September, 1861, by General Frémont. "The General was a good man," remarks the author of *THE CRISIS* (p. 573), "had he done nothing else than encourage the Western Sanitary Commission, that glorious army of

drilled men and women who gave up all to relieve the suffering which the war was causing. Would that a novel,—a great novel,—might be written setting forth with truth its doings. The hero of it would be Calvin Brinsmade, and a nobler hero than he was never under a man's hand. For the glory of generals fades beside his glory."

In discharge of his benevolent duties Mr. Yeatman went south to the scenes of carnage, and the hostile armies were filled with a new emotion, that of tender compassion, as they witnessed his devoted efforts. About three and a half million dollars in goods, and three quarters of a million in cash were disbursed by this noble institution.

At one time himself a slave-owner, Mr. Yeatman busied himself also with the future of the emancipated negro. The Freedmen's Bureau was organized on a plan devised by him, and in 1865 President Lincoln invited him to become its Commissioner, an offer which he did not see his way clear to accept. Some have called him the John Howard of his generation.

The character of Stephen Brice is composite; but many of the incidents in his life correspond exactly with incidents in the early career of Mr. Henry Hitchcock of St. Louis. Mr. Hitchcock, while of New England stock, was born at Mobile, Alabama, where his father was chief-justice of the State. After studying at Yale, he came west to St. Louis, and was examined for the bar by Hamilton R. Gamble. Like Stephen Brice he made his reputation by an election speech on behalf of Lincoln's candidacy, which was considered a masterpiece of oratory. He was also a constant contributor to the Press, and became in 1857 assistant-editor of *THE ST. LOUIS INTELLIGENCER*.

He did not take part in the war until late in the contest, but yet he saw a good deal of its most stirring incidents. As Sherman's judge advocate he marched with that general to the sea, and was present at the celebrated interview between him and Johnston. It was Major Hitchcock, as we read in Sherman's Memoirs, who was entrusted with the important duty of carrying the despatches to Washington, to place them in the President's hands. Mr. Hitchcock was a member of the same Presbyterian church as Mr. Yeatman, and was associated with him in many ways.

The incident of the forced auction at the Carvel mansion is based on fact. Similar events happened in the case of Mr. McPheeters and of ex-Governor Polk, who lived respectively at Lucas Avenue and Fourteenth Street. Certain of those who chose to bid for the articles offered, and got them at a bargain, contracted no little amount of enduring ill-will.

It is probable that many of the characteristics of the German Richter, who meets with so untimely a death, have their counterpart in the life and personality of Judge Leo Rassieur, a South St. Louis German, who stood up staunchly for the Union in 1861, fought bravely through the war, and now occupies the honoured position of Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic.

General Grant appears in one of the earlier chapters as engaged in the discharge of duties to which he was for some time accustomed. Those years when he tried to make a living out of farming,—selling wood and other produce in the city—were a time of great straitness of finances with him. He left farming for the real estate business, and for a short time the firm of Boggs and Grant had an office in Pine Street, between

Second and Third Streets. This enterprise, in turn, proved unsatisfactory, and he applied for a place in the Customs, then under the direction of an old army acquaintance named Lind, who had served under him as lieutenant in the Mexican War. For two months in the winter of 1859-60 he worked at the Custom House without wages, when the death of Lind prevented his appointment from being ratified. This closed his business career in St. Louis, and he moved north to Ohio, where he lived until the breaking out of hostilities in the following year.

William Tecumseh Sherman was closely connected with St. Louis during the ten years previous to the war; and on April 1st of the eventful year 1861, he came to the city to be president of one of the street-car companies. Before two months were over he had resigned, in order to take command of a regiment, and it was during this stay that the capture of Camp Jackson occurred. The account of the day's doings which Sherman gives in his Memoirs closely corresponds with the account in *THE CRISIS*. He was living at the time in Locust Street, a few doors from the Carvel house of the story, and just one short block north of Yeatman's Row. The company of which he was president was called the St. Louis or Fifth Street, and came to be known later as the Broadway Cable. Its stables were at Bremen, four short blocks from Belmont, and not very far from the Beverley Allen house in Grand Avenue. Here he had an office, where Colonel John O'Fullen, a resident of the neighbourhood, used to visit him. "He daily came down to my office in Bremen," writes Sherman in his Memoirs, "and we walked up and down the pavement by the hour, deploring the sad condition of our country, and the seeming drift

towards dissolution and anarchy." The Fair Grounds lay a short distance inland, and were conveniently placed for the exercise of that hospitality to young officers which Mr. Brinsmade is described in the story as offering so freely.

With the change from steamboat traffic to railroads, St. Louis has left the river-front and pushed inland. Only this year the chief race-course of the city, which was formerly at the Fair Grounds, has been changed to a locality situated seven miles due west

from Main Street, and four miles west of Camp Jackson. The residential houses on the bluffs north and south are survivals of an early time; and the commercial portion of the city, instead of ending at Fourth Street, begins there and extends westward. As described in *THE CRISIS*, the old houses, once centres of life and hospitality, are now dark, dingy and deserted.

JAMES MAIN DIXON.

St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.

PATER'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

"THE perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works are common to men; and surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men, who have sought to express the images of their minds where those of their bodies have failed: so the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity."

This saying of Bacon's was never more true than in the case of Walter Pater. *MARIUS THE EPICUREAN* and the unfinished *GASTON DE LATOUR* are in a special and peculiar sense his children, and bear upon them the stamp and impress of heredity more distinctly than is the case with many physical children.

Those who read and admired the earlier work eagerly looked to find in the later an intellectual feast of good things such as its writer knew so well to serve. But, although it may seem ungracious to criticise a mere fragment by one in whose creed beauty of form held so high a place, and who was always so careful in polishing and refining any piece of literature which he voluntarily gave to the public, still we must frankly confess to have found *GASTON DE LATOUR* disappointing, and this in spite of one or two exquisite passages, suggestive of Pater in his happier vein. It is questionable whether it was wise to republish it at all, in view of a reputation already assured and needing nothing that we find in this book to raise it higher.

In choice of subject and method of execution we have in *Gaston* a feeblor

edition of *Marius*, himself painted in none too brilliant colours. Indeed the later hero (to give him that name) plays an even smaller part than the earlier, and serves but as a peg upon which to hang philosophic apothegms. There is a want of current in the book, amounting almost to stagnation, which causes one to regret that the form of narrative, however slight, was chosen in preference to that of the essay. Could we have had the charming picture of Montaigne's personality, together with the able summary of his philosophy, in the form of an essay, and perhaps another on the interesting Giordano Bruno, we should have had the pith of what is valuable in the book without the introduction of the colourless *Gaston*, who is after all but the veriest shadow. The fact that Pater should have conceived and partially executed a second book on such closely analogous lines to the first, reflects somewhat upon his originality, and proves the truth of the contention that they are both in a peculiarly close sense his children, bearing the strongest family likeness to him and to each other.

By a closer examination of these two brothers we shall endeavour to draw nearer to the character of the father, and to see the world, for the time being, with his eyes.

And in spite of their clearness of vision and delicacy of perception where beauty was concerned, we must admit that they were short-sighted eyes,—wilfully short-sighted when it was a question of seeing anything offensive or disagreeable. They had

a way (a very pleasant way for their owner) of throwing as it were a golden haze over anything repugnant, extending sometimes even to sin itself, which was apt to be smothered in some such elegantly-turned phrase as the following, taken at random from GASTON DE LATOUR: "Appetite and vanity abounded, but with an abundant, superficial grace. . . . which, as by some æsthetic sense in the air, made the most of the pleasant outskirts of life. . . . only blent, like rusty-old armour wreathed in flowers," etc.

However valuable this power of artistic selection in smoothing the artist's path through life (and it is unquestionably an attitude of mind to be cultivated, within bounds), it nevertheless, when pushed too far, can become a hindrance to those who would "see life steadily, and see it whole." From the Epicureans of old to the modern Christian Scientists there have been those in every age whose love of ease and pleasantness has led them to seek, in theory at least, to eliminate the evils and the disagreeables from life. Not of the normal, healthy type, these advocates of the pleasant, realising instinctively their inadequate equipment for the battle of life, prefer to expend what little energy they possess in the attempt to cheat themselves into believing that all difficulties are either needless or imaginary, rather than in the effort, natural to the healthy man, to recognise and overcome them.

In Pater's creed beauty is placed above truth, and he therefore lacks the robustness of those saner thinkers who are not hampered by being æsthetes first and philosophers afterwards. There is an element of cowardice almost pathetic in this clinging to the "goodly outside,"—this shrinking from stirring too deeply the abyss below, which is well

indicated in the concluding sentence of GASTON DE LATOUR, the last words which Pater will ever speak to us. He is still considering his favourite theme, the harmonising of discordant elements, the reconciling of good and evil, which is the motive of his most earnest writing, the goal, pursued with passionate longing, of a life of study. And he ends, as he begins, with a question, the form of which is the keynote of his strongest bent. "How could Gaston," he asks, "reconcile the 'opposed points' which to him could never become indifferent, of what was right and wrong in the matter of art?" This indecision, this trick of postulating and leaving unanswered difficult questions, is strongly characteristic. It is, however, in the elder of Pater's children that we shall find the family traits most distinctly emphasised.

In MARIUS THE EPICUREAN we have laid bare to our view the intimate history of the struggles and phases of a lonely soul in search of truth and intellectual peace, together with a masterly summary of the different philosophies and religions which influenced and moulded his mental and spiritual growth. No more interesting theme, within its own line, could have been chosen by any writer, and hardly a more difficult one. And the triumph of Pater lies in the fact that he has done it justice, and has more than succeeded in a field where scarcely another writer of our time could have even ventured to follow. If it be true that a great part of art lies in selection, then the mere selection of this theme and background raises him to a high place among both artists and philosophers.

In the character of Marius Pater has given us a glorified example of the dreamy, contemplative student, a type familiar throughout history; but instead of giving him, as has usually

been done in drama and romance, a secondary part to play while the interest centred in the hero, the man of action, to whom he was but the foil, Pater has raised his student to the first place, and it is in the history of his inner life that we find the heart and essence of this remarkable book.

It is safe to assume that as our culture grows and our experience of life widens and deepens, we become less and less inclined to set up narrow, or even positive, ideals, conformity to which we demand from those to whom we give our admiration and from whom we are willing to learn. Perhaps the only vital test of true living, of the development of character on the right lines, the one way by which we can tell that the waters are sweet and not stagnant, is by the waning of intolerance and the waxing of charity. And we must beware of seeking to find in Marius the traits which could only belong to his anti-type. But even while under the potent charm of Marius as he is, we cannot escape from a disturbing consciousness of his limitations, his inadequacy even to fulfil his own destiny. There is something lacking on the human side to make him convincing as a living personality. We feel that he was old without ever having been young, and that in many senses he never really lived at all.

Were we called upon to criticise, the words *shadowy, unreal, visionary, ineffectual*, would at once rise to our lips. At times we feel almost impatient and inclined to ask when he will come to some decision, when begin to live. He was an intellectual aristocrat, and occupied a stall in the theatre of life which he never left to mingle with the actors. We pine for him to do something, even something wrong; but he remains throughout a sensitive plate,

as it were, an excellent reflector and exponent, but incapable of taking a side and never rising even to the height of pessimism. He never leaves the Happy Valley, never makes the choice of life. He is for ever taking in vague and indefinite impressions, never giving out definite ones. The nearest approach we get to a summing up, a philosophy of life, is in certain rare and ecstatic moods, exquisitely reflected in Pater's ornate prose, in which he receives flashes of the universal harmony and is stirred to his being's depths with the consciousness that in some way he can neither explain nor understand nor even always feel, "all's right with the world." He is a *negative* not a *positive*, to adopt M. Désjardin's classification. His only passion was for truth, and even that towards the end he scarcely hoped to find. He was too delicately responsive to every aspect of beauty, too sensitive to every side of truth, ever to rise to the height of synthesis; too easily penetrated superficially by certain elements of truth to be permeated and possessed by truth as a whole; too much on the look-out for small thrills of joy and beauty to become instinct with its spirit as the main-spring of his life. He was ever searching, never finding, although to say this is only to say that he was a philosopher.

The only fragment of belief in which he found some ultimate comfort was in a variation of Socrates's *dæmon*,—a spiritual companion ever at hand to counsel and direct the submissive soul, an inner voice of light and leading which is, after all, little more than the glorified conscience of the modern rationalist.

Although so delighting in physical sunshine, spiritually he never rose out of the twilight. It is the beauty of decay, of lingering among tombs that

is wafted to us in the book,—nay more, it is the beauty of death. His negative attitude of tolerance implies a receptivity wide enough to include, as a part of life, even death itself, fusing in the fervent heat of his soul's fire all irreconcilable elements. He was a thinker, a philosopher, a dreamer of dreams,—the very opposite of the modern man. And in nothing is his filial resemblance more marked, for in Pater himself we have an extreme example of the medieval survival in culture.

Marius was not (with all deference to his creator) even an Epicurean, except in that he was more strongly attracted by the tenets of that school than by any other of the philosophic systems of his time. If we consider briefly some of the salient features in this school, we shall readily perceive how great is the discrepancy, even in essentials, between their teaching and the attitude of Marius. The latter, although called an Epicurean, was almost equally attracted by the Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, and later by the Christianity of Cornelius and Cecilia. The very fact of this susceptibility to other influences differentiates him from the Epicurean of history, whose leading characteristic was an almost servile acceptance of the founder's dogmas. While Platonists, Stoics, and others, grew and developed, Epicureans stood still in superstitious stagnation, the very opposite of Marius, whose open mind can scarcely be denied. Further, the orthodox Epicurean rejected once and for all any concern with death, which for Marius, as we have seen, always possessed a peculiar fascination.

Again, Epicurus lived in the present and enjoyed the *here and now*, while Marius never could shake off the influence of the past. Instead of possessing his past, he was rather

possessed by it, and this to an almost unhealthy extent. It was for ever coming and laying its ghostly finger upon him, preventing him from adequately realising and participating in the present.

Epicurus too, was more robust, more democratic even than Marius, as in his view of pleasure there was room for the poor, if just and wise, while for Marius beauty in externals was a necessity. He enjoyed high thinking but not plain living, and his view of the simple life was a comprehensive one. He bid his disciples avoid all culture, and condemned æsthetic discussions as only fit for sensitive and sentimental souls. Marius, as we know, was deeply cultured and delighted in dialectic.

In yet another respect do we find that Marius falls short of the Epicurean standard. Epicureanism approaches closely to rationalism in that the trained sage has acquired the power of discrimination between real and apparent pleasures, and almost instinctively rejects the latter without regret. Only the learners were troubled by conscious difficulty of choice, and in this Marius never completed his novitiate. He was, as we have seen, ever distracted by the difficulty of choice, of decision, by his morbidly acute perception of the friction in life,—the painful effort to reconcile life as he found it with the beautiful inner life that he would fain have lived, undisturbed by conflict with hard realities. His failure to find the harmony for which he longed, or to solve in any way satisfactory to himself the problem of good and evil is accountable for the tragedy of his life; and that, in its lack of work done and dearth of even definite philosophical conclusions, we cannot but feel to have been greater than the tragedy of his death, in which the writer appears to see a sort of atone-

ment in the sacrifice of his life for his friend. He died, however, as he had lived, and the beauty of the sacrifice is marred by the fact (artistically in accordance with his characteristic indecision) that it was the outcome of mere accident, and the direct result of his way of drifting with the tide and offering no resistance to circumstances. Although we are distinctly given to understand that he did not afterwards regret the consequences of his inaction, it yet renders the sacrifice a negative rather than a positive virtue.

In perhaps nothing else was Marius so Epicurean as in this very quality of passiveness. The teacher's conception even of pleasure was negative, and consisted rather in the absence of pain than in any active enjoyment. It was essentially a middle-aged philosophy; there was no room for action or growth, and therefore none for youth in such a system. It was a state of blessedness that was sought,—to be, not to do. In estimating and attempting to understand the Epicurean point of view we have perhaps failed to take sufficiently into account the feeble health of Epicurus himself, more especially as it influenced his definition of pleasure, which must in every case of necessity be co-terminous with the capacity of the subject.

Pater, too, was the victim of delicate health, which he has, perforce, transmitted to his children. He was so far removed from the healthy human type,—he touched life himself at so few points,—that the power to generate such a type was inevitably out of his reach.

What then, makes the charm of this book, and what, if anything positive, can we learn from the gentle, ineffectual Marius?

First, it is one of the few books of our time which possesses an atmo-

sphere of its own. It has a rich, original flavour as of old wine. With its beautiful historic setting, its local colour, its stateliness and distinction of style, the soothing serenity of its gentle flow, it is of especial value to us in these days of crudity and hurry. Instinct not with the spirit of our age but with the breath of long ago, it supplies a needed antidote to our over-civilisation. As we follow Marius in his external life and are companions of his walks about the Rome of Marcus Aurelius in the early dawn of the Christian Era, as well as in his spiritual progress, we feel that in both senses it is good for us to be here. There is in the book a freshness as of early morning,—as if the writer had been able to arrest and make his own the glory of those morning hours of golden sunshine in which Marius so delighted to steep both body and spirit, and in which he could do his best intellectual work.

If Marius has no direct achievement, no definite advice to offer us, we can yet learn much by implication from the story of his life. We can learn the danger of regarding one's own personality as the pivot of the Universe, of this perpetual "inspection of our own mental secretions." We can learn the truth of the German proverb, *Probiren geht uber studiren*, that it is better to stand forth and take one's place bravely in the battle of life, willing to share both pleasure and pain, and that it is sometimes, nay always, wiser to take a side, even though it be the wrong one, than to squander intellectual power in the attempt to cheat oneself into believing that inaction is better than the risk of possible or even probable mistakes.

Also we can learn not to expect too much of life. Both Epicurus and Marius fell into the fatal error of imagining that pleasure and not work,

not the building of character, should be man's goal. They attempted to build upon a rotten foundation, a fabric of dreams; what wonder that they found therein no rest or abiding peace? They failed to recognise that pleasure is but an incident in life,—“a bounty of Nature, a grace of God”—and that in making it the conscious aim they robbed it of its delicate bloom and lost its essence, which must consist not merely in the absence of pain, but in the healthy reaction from work done.

Beyond the acquisition of knowledge Marius never did any work, and for neglecting a law of Nature he paid the penalty in a starved emotional life and the incapacity for other than tepid sensations. He never attained even to the unconscious, impulsive action of the healthy man. He well illustrates the extreme academic attitude, which is a paralysing one. While perhaps the average healthy man thinks too little, Marius proves that there is such a thing as thinking too much, and that there exist certain speculative *cul-de-sacs* which in the world of thought occupy much the same position that perpetual motion and flying-machines have hitherto held in the world of matter. The intellectual life must justify itself by at least some measure of practice; otherwise we have but one-sided development; there are but drones in

the hive. The self-conscious are not those upon whom we can depend for our best work, and what a sad prospect for the race if we had many Mariuses among us!

But we must not forget that he, like us all, was the victim of circumstance. It was his misfortune never to be forced into contact with the realities of life. Had he travelled, had he married, or, above all, had it been necessary for him to earn his bread, he would have been a thousand times the gainer, and his ripe scholarship and rich artistic nature might have blossomed and borne fruit.

But in spite of all that he lacked there is yet about him a gentle dignity, a power through repose which binds us to him with a subtle spell, and makes us feel that his failure was not his own fault so much as the inevitable issue of his too sensitive nature, and that, being Marius, and Pater's child, he could not have been other than he was. His scorn for dogma and his open mind alike command our respect, while we recognise and regret that his possession of the faults of these very qualities hindered any result in action or conduct. Perhaps he showed true greatness in his perception that no single philosophy or religion can be more than an arc in the circle of truth.

F. E. H.

WHERE THE PELICAN BUILDS ITS NEST.

THE sun shines on no more desolate or dreary country than the Great Never Never Land of Australia, whose grim deserts have claimed many a victim to the cause of knowledge.

The explorer's life in these deadly solitudes is not one of many pleasures. Rather do unpleasant possibilities for ever obtrude upon his weary brain, until he is well nigh distraught, or at least reduced to a morbid state of melancholy in keeping with his miserable surroundings. Little wonder is it that disaster so often attends the traveller in those lonely lands. The strongest will becomes weakened by the insidious influences of the country, and the most buoyant spirit is quickly dulled. All Nature seems to conspire against him. The stunted mulga and mallee shrubs afford no welcome shade; they dot the sand-wastes in monotonous even growths, and the eye is wearied by their everlasting motionless presence. The saltbush clumps and spinifex patches conceal hideous reptiles. Snakes and centipedes crawl across the track; scaly lizards, venomous scorpions, ungainly bungarrows, and a host of nameless pests are always near to torture and distract. Even the birds are imbued with a profound solemnity that adds still more to the wanderer's depression. The pelican stands owlishly in his path as if to guard from intrusion its undiscovered home; the carrion-crow with its ominous scream is for ever circling overhead; and the mopoke's dull monotone is as a calling from a shadowy world.

With this introductory apology, as it were, for my plainly written narrative, I give you a story of travel, a note from a wanderer's log, a mere incident of many, from that land of interminable sand-wastes.

We were three months out on an expedition from Kalgoorlie to the Gulf country, and fortune had been friendly during that time, leading us to claypans, native wells, and water-holes, opportunely as our store of the precious fluid gave out. Our course was as a triumphal march, and my old comrade, Mac, who had often endured the horrid pangs of thirst in similar tracts, shook his head doubtfully at our good luck. "We'll hae tae suffer for this yet," he would say, and I could not but think there might be truth in the words.

My party consisted of four in all; Phillip Moresby, a young Cambridge graduate, was the geologist and my right-hand man. Mac and Stewart were two muscular Scotsmen who had served me in good stead on many previous journeys. They were imbued with the dare-devil spirit of the rover and were content to follow, or, as they put it, to "risk their carcasses," wherever I might lead.

Our equipment was dangerously simple; five pack horses and two camels bore our complete outfit, and considering that our mining implements included a boring-plant and "dolly" arrangement, it may be understood that the necessities of life were cut down to a minimum.

The two best horses, Sir John and Reprieve, carried the bulky water-bags only; the others,—poor

miserable specimens of horseflesh, emaciated and worn by their long march and never varying diet of spinifex and saltbush-tips—paced wearily on with jolting burdens of tinned meats (*tinned dog* in the bushman's vocabulary), flour and extracts,—the sum total of the explorer's needs.

The camels were strong and wiry. Slavery had been with me on a former expedition; we knew his powers to a nicety, and he never failed us. Misery was a young and fiery bull that needed much watching. He was rather vicious and surly, and not infrequently had to be coaxed along by the aid of nose-tweezers; yet he was a powerful and enduring animal, and bore his burden well, if less patiently than his neighbour.

On the morning of August 22nd, 1898, we were camped in latitude $26^{\circ} 37' 43''$, longitude $128^{\circ} 9' 7''$, by the side of a much evaporated soak—the residue of a previous rainfall, but how long previous was beyond conjecture.

We had reached the eastern limit of our march and found no auriferous country. Phil, it is true, had accumulated a collection of water-worn coloured pebbles which he fondly called rubies, and his joy was shared by Mac and Stewart who swore by Phil's knowledge. I called his specimens garnets, worth, perhaps, a few shilling an ounce, but then, my experience was general and at best but superficial, and I did not trouble my head about the specific gravity, which factor was the all important one to Phil. However, at this camp we held a council to decide the course of our further journeyings. The country in the vicinity was a vast rolling plain strewn with ironstone rubble and conglomerate boulders; but in the far eastward distance a

dim hazy outline seemed to interrupt the horizon's even curve, and I noted in my log-book: "Viewed at a distance of about twenty miles mountain range, apparently basalt formation, sides precipitous, district rolling sand plain."

We named the soak Doubtful Water, which title had a double significance; it could not be relied upon to retain its fluid contents, and it also, in a sense, described our plans at that time, for they were very doubtful indeed.

Our expedition had been undertaken in the hope of acquiring geographical knowledge of an unknown tract of country; but then, like many others, I had dreamed of flowing rivers and beautiful green valleys, grassy downs and luxurious forests. I had hoped also to encounter auriferous country, which was my reason for transporting unwieldy machinery over those barren sands. To be strictly truthful, I should say that it was really the supposed Eldorado of the Interior that had been my visionary incentive.

And now we had travelled across country full five hundred miles, to find only sand and spinifex, saltbush and mallee scrub, ironstone rubble, and barren quartz boulders! My disappointment was keen, and Mac did not improve my good temper when he caustically asked, "An' whaur's the land o' promise noo?" I looked at the camels listlessly chewing the fibrous ends of saltbush clumps, then at the skeleton frames of the horses as they lay gasping in the sand, too weary to eat. "You've got the rubies, Mac," I said quizzically; "what more do you want?"

"We'll shift our course to northward, boys," I said that evening, as we gazed at each other through the smoke of our camp-fire. "Hang it all," said Phil, who was youthful and

enterprising, "won't you let us have a look at the mountains?" "Mountain be jiggered," muttered Stewart; "A dinna want another spike in the back." He referred to a previous experience of his when in the vicinity of the Leopold Mountains in the North-West.

"There is not much to be gained so far as I can see," I answered. "The natives will probably be numerous, and as a matter of course, unfriendly—" "But the formations?" interrupted Phil eagerly. "Basalt, or diorite, or sandstone — nothing gold-bearing," I replied rather sharply. I had mapped out a course at the start in which the 128th degree of longitude was to be the extent of our easting; we had arrived at that bearing now, and having encountered nothing but the most miserable sand-country, there was certainly little encouragement to proceed.

However, Phil was most anxious to explore the shadowy ranges; he had never seen a mountain in West Australia before, he explained. Mac and Stewart now supported his wish with much ingenious argument, the latter having apparently forgotten his prejudices in that direction, and in a weak moment I consented to their entreaties.

An extract from my log dated August 23rd, 1898, reads as follows: "Decided to explore mountain on horizon. Started 9 a.m. Course due East. Slavery and Misery shaping well, but horses failing rapidly." Before we had gone ten miles one of the horses had to be shot; it was literally too weak to stand, and the poor brute's agony was being but needlessly prolonged. Slavery received much additional burden in consequence, but he merely looked sorrowfully at me as I pulled on his saddle-ropes, and continued his melancholy march.

As we approached our new objective, the country gradually became altered until when within a few miles of the mountain, the surface appeared strewn with great ironstone boulders of peculiar shape; and deep dry ravines, half filled with iron-sand silt, tore up the ground in long parallel courses.

It was indeed a strange sight and I marvelled greatly at the extraordinary geological features shown. But we were yet to be more surprised; as we neared the base of the mountain, that now presented to us a face of somewhat precipitous ascent, great "blows" of basalt rock reared high above the ground, and deep pit-like cavities penetrated the iron formations, marking a semi-circular line of indentations. And in these strange craters a greenish yellow fluid seethed and foamed, sending up thin columns of pungent blue vapour that rose through the quivering heat-haze and dissolved high above our heads. Phil's explanation of the phenomenon was elaborate and by no means uninteresting. He analysed the fluid and found it to be essentially salt, yet holding in solution much iron and a considerable percentage of copper. The cauldrons, however, varied considerably in size as in the nature of their contents. In some the liquid literally boiled, and surrounding these a thick crust of salt and lime heightened the pit-levels several feet. Others maintained merely a tepid heat, and they were proved to contain much less foreign matter than their near neighbours; their depths, also, averaged but nine feet, as against a sounding of twenty-seven feet obtained in the hottest and widest cavity.

We camped alongside the least odoriferous of the cauldrons, and now a serious difficulty arose; there was here not even the much maligned

saltbush to provide feed for our weary beasts; not even a thorny patch of spinifex could be seen. Far up on the mountain side, a scraggy forest of stunted Eucalypti found root, but no other form of vegetation was in sight. Our camp was fixed on a solid iron base.

"The puir animiles canna eat iron-stane," said Mac, sorrowfully surveying the scene. "They'll have to fast again, to-night," I replied; "we'll see what can be done in the morning." The poor brutes had fasted so often before that they seemed to have grown quite accustomed to the ordeal; and only sniffed at the sand dejectedly, before laying their tired bodies down to rest.

On the following morning we prepared to thoroughly explore the mountain. This was not to be such an easy process as we imagined, for its extent was much greater than we had at first calculated. It stretched backwards for a considerable distance, presenting to the north and south a saddle-back ridge connecting two dome-like elevations. On the side on which we were camped masses of ironstone rubble banked the base to a considerable height, and extended far out into the plains. From our tent the ascent rose very gradually for a long distance, then sharply rising it culminated in one of the great domes. The lower altitudes were thinly feathered by mallee shrubs and a few sandalwood bushes, but higher up the solid rock appeared, gaunt and bare.

We hobbled the horses and camels and turned them loose to graze on any vegetable growth they might find, which by the appearance of the country promised to be rather an unsatisfactory quest. Then we set off on our journey of discovery.

Stewart carried the water-bag, filled with distilled fluid from one of the

cauldrons. Mac bore a lengthy coil of rope on his shoulders, to be used in case of emergency, and he also gripped tightly his double-barrelled breech-loader. Phil burdened himself with a pick and a prospector's hammer, for tapping the rock and obtaining samples. I carried only my sextant and my rifle; the former instrument is indispensable to the traveller, the latter is always useful. And so off we went, never dreaming of disaster, without even a piece of damper in our pockets. We were not used to mountaineering in West Australia.

Half an hour's labour brought us to the belt of scrub; and now we saw that the ascent of the mountain was to be no child's play, for the summit towered yet high above us.

As we passed through the leafless forest, which formed no shade yet obscured our vision, a little incident occurred that altered the whole day's plans, and entirely changed the object of our excursion. Stewart, who bore the heaviest load, came last, and we had barely penetrated midway through the brush when he bellowed out, "A crocodile, Phil, a crocodile!"

Phil turned with alacrity, as did we all; and Mac nearly strangled himself in his endeavours to extricate his neck from the cumbrous coil of rope, that he might level his gun at the monster. Stewart had fallen considerably to the rear, and when we returned we found him madly floundering through the brush, in the wake of an enormous bungarrow, that flopped its ungainly limbs energetically in its endeavours to escape. A bungarrow, I should mention, is a fearsome looking animal, half reptile half saurian, that has its home in the desert interior. Its body underneath is of a dirty yellow colour, similar to the ironstone sand; and its back is sheathed in horny scales that easily deflect a bullet. The mouth is enor-

mous, as is also the tail which tapers to a very fine point. Altogether Stewart's exclamation,—"a crocodile"—described the appearance of the animal sufficiently well.

"Take care, Stewart," I warned; "if he bites, you won't forget it in a hurry."

"Nae fear o' that," he shouted back, and disappeared after his elusive prey, closely followed by Mac, who made repeated efforts to sight his blunderbuss on the brute, but without avail.

Phil and I waited for some considerable time for the return of the adventurers. To such a level does Australian travel reduce the mind, that I fear we were speculating whether that bungarrow would be edible! The merciless sun, however, soon brought our thoughts back to us; we were absolutely melting.

"What *has* become of those beggars?" said Phil, irritably. At that moment a loud report crashed through the air, causing even the twigs to quiver, and died away in long trembling waves of sound. We waited expectantly, but no voices heralded our companions' return. Soon another report thundered along the mountain side, and I groaned in despair. "They are bushed, Phil," I cried, "and we cannot locate the sound." Hastily I discharged my rifle in the hope that Mac's sharp ears would catch the first decisive, penetrating report of the exploding cordite, before the mountain drowned it in reverberating echoes. But it was in vain; rarely indeed can sound be located in such circumstances. The sharp crack of a rifle is eclipsed by the rolling echoes that follow, and the point of discharge can at best be but a dangerous guess. From our present altitude we could trace the flat expressionless desert fading away in the distance. We had rounded a bluff in our ascent, and so were

debarred a view of our camp; and this fact would seriously confuse the wanderers.

We heard no more shots, and concluded that the bungarrow-hunters had realised the hopelessness of signalling in such a manner.

"I guess," said Phil, "we'll move upwards; we may see them from the top." I had not thought of that,—as I have said, prolonged incarceration amid the sand-plains does not sharpen the intellectual faculties. "Mac and Stewart have probably sufficient sense to do likewise," I answered, much relieved, and we renewed our march. A little later it was borne upon us abruptly that the water-bag as well as Stewart had disappeared. We had both acquired thirsts of elaborate proportions, and we cursed Stewart and his crocodile heartily.

The sharp edges of the ironstone rubble cut deeply into our much worn boots, and lacerated our feet. I had not reckoned on this; and when we emerged into the open, and clambered over the bare rocks that were hot as Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, I determined in future to strictly forbid mountain-exploration in West Australia.

After another hour of acute effort we drew ourselves painfully to the top of the dome-like culmination, and looked on the other side. A wilderness of dwarfed Eucalypti met our gaze, stretching far into the flats below; the mountain fell away in a gentle slope,—so different from the heights we had scaled—and merged into the plains many miles beyond. Numerous gullies, once cleft by rushing torrents, marked the trend of the land; and where these ancient river-channels united, a clump of lime-trees flourished, denoting clearly a water-bearing area of generous kind.

As we looked, several thin wisps of

smoke appeared, curling lazily up into the sky. The fires had evidently just been lighted.

"Natives," said Phil, laconically; and indeed there was little occasion to doubt the unmistakable evidences of the Aborigine.

"I hope they are not numerous," I said anxiously, knowing from experience that a few natives are always easily handled, whereas a tribe are almost invariably aggressively disposed to the stranger. We withdrew ourselves quickly from our lofty perch, and a strange sight we must have looked to those poor nomads, as we stood outlined against the clear blue sky.

About fifty feet on the right side of the dome, towards the saddle-back ridge, Phil noticed a peculiar break in the iron crust, and he picked his steps cautiously forward to obtain a few samples from the rock. Our enthusiasm had cooled considerably. The mountain certainly afforded indications that in other circumstances would have at once commanded our closest attention. But now I scanned the hill-side anxiously for trace of my lost comrades, and revolved in my mind the awkward probability of our horses and camels being stolen by the natives in our absence.

Phil reached the outcrop, and after giving a few preliminary taps on the surface, I was surprised to see him disappear beneath two great over-hanging ledges. They evidently formed a kind of cave, and once inside, Phil's mallet resounded vigorously. Suddenly, I heard him give a yell of delight, but at the same time my ears caught the dim echoes of Mac's gun. I looked all round; nothing was in sight on our side of the mountain, the camp being still hidden by a tantalising bluff. I scrambled up the dome's smooth surface, and looked on the northward

slope. Instinctively my eyes sought the native camp sheltered among the limes. A heavy pall hung above the trees, the result of the numerous fires now alight. I could distinguish the dancing flames, and here and there a black form showed clearly against them, but nothing further appeared to disturb the peace of the landscape.

I turned away, feeling somewhat disconcerted at the prolonged absence of my sturdy henchmen. Never before had they been left entirely to their own resources, and though they were both well-proved bushmen, I could not but feel anxious for their welfare.

Before I could descend from my perch, Phil clambered up beside me. In his hand he carried a ragged piece of rusty ironstone quartz. "What do you think that is?" he enquired with elation.

"Rather barren-looking stuff," I replied, turning it over carelessly. Then I noticed a seam of sparkling yellow; eagerly I held the specimen to the light, and examined it closely; the vein was clear and distinct; it was assuredly gold. I tried the knife-test, and was convinced; the yellow metal was soft and ductile.

"Well, it's not pyrites this time!" spoke Phil triumphantly.

"No," I replied; "you've got the genuine article now, and no mistake. It should be worth more than the rubies."

Another loud report boomed up towards us, and Phil's sharp eyes at once detected the smoke of the discharge. "Why, they are on the wrong side of the mountain!" he cried. The puff of smoke yet lingered over the tops of the mallee scrub about half a mile beneath us, and soon I could descry the waving branches that betokened the approach of the wanderers. We watched closely. Sometimes Stew-

art's helmet would show through the sparse brush, only to disappear again as the vegetation became more dense. What they were doing on that side of the hill, I could not imagine. They seemed to be making rapid progress, but strangely enough were rounding the base of the summit. Evidently they had not noticed us.

At length they came to a clear patch of rocky ground, and we saw to our astonishment that they were running.

"What on earth is the matter with them?" cried Phil in wonderment, his newly discovered gold-mine being for the time completely forgotten. I unslung my rifle, and sent three dum-dums crashing into space. The runners came to a halt, and looked all round. Then they must have seen us,—and at our lofty eminence, we could hardly have escaped notice, had they looked up earlier; their course veered, and without stopping a moment they charged wildly towards us.

And now a startling sight appeared that elicited a yell of horror from Phil, and caused me again to hurriedly unstrap my rifle. Less than two hundred yards behind our companions, about a score of stalwart natives came bursting through the bush in hot pursuit. We had not noticed them before because of their similarity in colour to the scraggy brushwood; but as they bounded into the open, their black bodies showed up clearly against the dull brown ironstone rock. That they were on the track of Mac and Stewart, and with hostile intent, was obvious. Some had spears, but the majority of the warriors carried only their waddies, or clubs; they were rapidly gaining on the fugitives, and those with spears were even preparing to discharge them. Mac was labouring heavily under his coil of rope, and

his gun was clutched to his side. Stewart still gripped his water-bag, and sped along behind his more portly fellow-fugitive. There was no time for consideration; hastily I slid the sighting-bar of my rifle to six hundred yards, and peering along the barrel, fired, so as to strike the ground in front of the oncoming horde. A cloud of sand flew up from the decayed rock, a few yards ahead of the foremost native, showing where the ball had struck, but though the pursuers seemed bewildered, they continued their rush. Again I fired, again and again until the air rent and quivered with the mighty echoes that thundered out. The fugitives were within three hundred yards of us, and a faint cheer floated up the hill, showing how truly they appreciated my diversion.

"Drop the coil, Mac!" shouted Phil. "Leave the water-bag, Stewart!" His instructions, however, were not heard or wilfully disobeyed, but the ardour of the pursuit was cooled; the warriors hesitated when two of their number dropped struck by a ricochet bullet. They had seen no spear or boomerang hurtling through the air, and could not understand such tactics. Another fusilade completed their demoralisation, and they turned and fled, dragging their wounded brethren after them by the hair of the head.

A few minutes later, Mac struggled up the rocky elevation on which we stood, and Stewart followed close after.

"A've never run like that frae ony man," spluttered Mac, as he crawled towards us on hands and knees; and his compatriot behind gave a deep grunt of sympathy. "If the black deevils wad only fight fair," continued Mac indignantly, as he rose to his feet, "we wad hae had a tussle for it."

"Nae mair spikes in the back fur me," groaned Stewart, breathing heavily as he swarmed up the rock.

Then before I could question them in any way, they stood together, and glaring towards their late pursuers, hurled out imprecations strange and sulphurous.

Meanwhile Phil silently picked up the water-bag which Stewart had deposited, and inverting it over his head gulped down great mouthfuls of the contents. He suddenly checked himself, however, and throwing down the bag, gasped and choked, and finally spat out several small stones. I looked at him in amazement, but Stewart, who had heard the gurgling sound, astonished me more; checking his flow of expletives, and with a look of horror on his face, he seized the water-bag. "Ye've swallowed ma rubies," he howled, and Mac who had discharged his final imprecation at the enemy, turned abruptly, and lifted up his voice in a wail of sympathy. "The rubies an' ma puir wee iguana," he said sorrowfully. Phil had now recovered himself, and picking up the small stones, he handed them to Stewart without comment. Explanations followed, and the experiences of the adventuresome pair were detailed with telling force.

"We lost the bungarrow," began Mac; "it ran in between twa rocks, an' only left its tail sticking oot, an' we pu'd an' pu'd at that but he was ow'r muckle for us"—here he paused to sigh regretfully, then continued his narrative.

It appeared that when they had realised themselves bushed, they kept moving along the belt of scrub in the hope to come upon us, and unknowingly had travelled right round the mountain. They had found the rubies in one of the dry gullies that ran towards the native camp, and in their zeal to obtain a good collection had

followed the old channel's course in the direction of the lime-trees, into the midst of the Blacks' domain. The result was as we had witnessed.

"We pit the rubies in the bag," said Stewart, "for we had nae other place tae carry them."

"I can understand why you held on to the bag," Phil said; "but Mac's reason for treasuring the heavy rope is beyond me."

"We hiv'na another rope in camp," said Mac shortly, which showed that that worthy gentleman had considered the future, even while he fled before the blood-thirsty natives.

Without further delay we began the descent, Phil having tapped off a number of specimens from his discovery which Mac and Stewart eagerly carried. "What wi' gold an' rubies an',—an' niggers," said the latter, "we should surely be content noo."

Carefully we slid down the rocky surfaces, and gingerly we trod over the glass-edged rubble. Then we entered the shadeless forest where the bungarrow-hunters had begun their eventful day's experiences, and with hurried steps steered towards the bluff that divided us from our camp.

I was not altogether unprepared for further trouble, and thus when we reached the headland, I viewed almost with indifference the extraordinary appearance of the ground we had vacated but a few hours previously. Around each cauldron several natives were disporting themselves, while our tent was surrounded by many inquisitive gins (women), who each in turn took a hasty peep within. I looked abroad, and far in the distance could see our beasts of burden manœuvring about in the vain effort to obtain some edible substance from the barren sands; and I heaved a sigh of relief when I saw that there were no Blacks in their vicinity.

"What are we going to do now?"

spoke Phil, after a considerable silence.

"A dinna ken what *you're* gaun tae dae," grimly said Mac, cocking his gun, "but a'm fur nae mair rinnin' awa'."

"There is little need for you to worry, Mac," I answered; "I don't think there is any fight in them." It suddenly had dawned upon me that the cauldrons might be the supposed dwellings of the natives' gods, Bilya-Backan or Piama. In that case nothing was more likely than that the Blacks should hold their fantastic ceremonials here; and the fact that the tent was unmolested gave credence to my surmise.

Without further hesitation we advanced beyond the bluff and strode slowly down the hill-side. I had no intention, however, of approaching within spear's throw of the warriors should they be disposed to await our arrival, as such a course would have been flatly suicidal; but as I anticipated, there was little cause to be alarmed.

Immediately the women saw us they gave vent to their terror in shrill cries; the men glanced up from their orgies, then broke into confusion and fled precipitately, followed by their noisy consorts.

"It's your turn noo, ye deevils," bellowed Mac triumphantly after them.

My little tale is at an end. It is one of the least dreary episodes of my West Australian experiences; and though the rubies were after all only garnets, and the gold-bearing rock of too refractory nature to be of any commercial value, even if transport could have been arranged, still our mountain-exploration had proved a genuine diversion. It had broken the dreary routine of our journeyings, and uplifted our thoughts from the endless wastes.

We renewed our march next morning, heading due north, but it was eight months later when we reached the coast beyond the Leopold Mountains.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

THE BRITISH OFFICER AND HIS FOREIGN CRITICS.

PERHAPS the most annoying spirit evoked by the present war in South Africa is that which accords a ready credence to any incident tending to reveal incompetence or stupidity in the ranks of our officers and men. Fortunately these well abused individuals as a body are absolutely indifferent to popular praise or blame; but this want of confidence constitutes a very serious danger for this country in the event of complications nearer home. The price of Consols, and ultimately the stability of every business in England, depends on the national belief in the success of our arms whether on land or sea. If, therefore, in a great European war the same ready acceptance should be accorded to every wild misstatement as to the handling and efficiency of our forces, the nation will learn to its cost the evils this attitude of mind will entail, and the danger that such a state of military ignorance, which alone renders this panic-telegraphy possible, may create for this country.

Now that trustworthy information is beginning to filter homewards, I find, as I expected from the first, that in comparison to those of other nations the British staff and regimental officers stand very creditably indeed.

It seems to be universally imagined that a people can be transferred from a state of peace to one of war by the mechanical operation of pressing an electric button, and that forthwith armies and fleets are set in motion and reach their appointed positions by a perfect mechanical system. But you have only to realise that the pressure of the telegraph-key frees not

only the electric current, but the fears, hopes, and passions of millions of men and women, and that these important factors are not so easily controlled as the actual movements of those detailed to fight, to understand how difficult it is to maintain the absolute mechanical precision of pace and execution.

At the first word of the outbreak of war the craziest rumours abound. Men see fleets massing where no ships could possibly appear, and even the glint of a couple of mower's scythes has ere now been magnified into the flashing sabres of a division of cavalry. That these are not assertions as wild as the rumours I deprecate I have only to draw on German experiences, for example, to prove. It has always been taught that the concentration of the German army at the beginning of hostilities in 1870 was a model for all time, and relatively it certainly was far better than anything of the kind that had ever been achieved before. That it will be immeasurably superior the next time that Germany goes to war there can be no doubt; but as the element of human nature will always prevail, the same essential mistakes will again occur, and when the true history of any future European struggle comes to be written, I venture to predict that our "stupid" officers will have as little reason to dread the comparison then, as they have now when contrasted with the Germans in 1870.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the problem of concentrating a huge army on a well defined land-frontier which has been fought over

for generations, and which is approached by a network of roads and railways whose carrying capacities can be calculated to a fraction, is of infinitely greater simplicity than the transfer of even a moderate force across six thousand miles of sea and one thousand miles by land into an unsurveyed and, in part, almost uninhabited country. Von Moltke was well aware of the difference when on one occasion he defended the British army against some disparaging critic by the remark, that English officers did not go to the front in first-class carriages.

Then again, it is not difficult in dealing with a regular army, whose capability for operations has been demonstrated in many campaigns, to predict its probable rate of movement and obvious aims; hence no one could be surprised that the broad plan of preliminary deployment was well and truly drawn up in Berlin in 1868.

But, considering the facilities of daily intercommunication which existed between Germany and France, it is nothing less than astonishing that the army as a whole was so badly informed as to the rottenness of the French military machine, which rottenness was bound to frustrate the vigorous offensive so feared by the Germans, and to meet which their elaborate plan of deployment had been calculated. The explanation of this omission lies deep in human nature, which is much the same in Prussia as in Great Britain. The officers on the spot had put off to a more convenient season the purchase of maps of their own garrisons, and the study of the printed matter available about their possible enemy.

According to the Headquarters' plan of deployment the troops coming from the interior of Germany were to be detrained and collected in army-corps and armies at stations some

three to four marches within the frontier, at points, that is to say, which the enemy could not by any possibility reach first.

I need only say in passing of this arrangement, which was duly and punctually carried out (every regiment having received a carefully drawn up time-table for road and rail), that though the capacities of the railways had been calculated at the low figure of twenty-four trains a day for double lines, and twelve for single, yet the whole elaborate scheme broke down in the first twenty-four hours, and that thenceforth the movement had to be carried out from hand to mouth, on the principle of first come, first served. This rate of dispatch excited the scorn of our own managers of railway-traffic, who even in those days were capable of handling one hundred and twenty trains a day over a double line.

Seven years later in India our single line railways, in spite of the disadvantages of native signallers, plate-layers, &c., and the long continuance of the strain on their resources, contrived to beat even the best of the German records in the railing of troops to the front.¹

The chief interest, however, in the way of blunders centres in what occurred in the frontier districts while the armies were massing, and where a French inroad was possible at almost any moment.

Owing to the constitution and distribution of the German army it was impossible to hold the whole of the frontier in force; but it was inadvisable to sacrifice territory without at least the show of defence, and also it is a military maxim, based on long

¹ So far as my information goes the 3 ft. 6 in. Cape and Natal single lines have also beaten them, over curves and gradients more severe than anything in Germany.

experience, to gain touch of your enemy as quickly as may be, and never to allow him to escape from under observation again.

Accordingly the few troops actually along the border were not withdrawn inland, but were left to be used as feelers, with directions to fall back only before superior forces. The whole line to be guarded was eighty-five miles in extent, fairly open rolling ground from Sierck on the Mosel to near Saarbrück; thence it rose into forest-clad mountains for about sixty miles to Weisenburg, and from there across an undulating wooded plain to the Rhine.

To watch the whole extent of country there were only twelve squadrons of cavalry and five battalions of infantry available, not exactly an adequate force for the business in hand. On the evening of July 15th things looked so threatening that the officer in command at Trier turned out the nearest cavalry (the 9th Hussars) and hurried them off to the frontier for patrol-duty and purposes of observation. This was an ordinary measure of precaution, abundantly justified, but unfortunately he appears to have forgotten to mention the fact that war had not been formally declared, and that therefore the frontier must be respected. The consequence was that a hot-headed subaltern, burning to be the first man to set foot in France, violated French territory forthwith, a result which might have proved decidedly embarrassing for the higher diplomacy had it been reported, for at the time Bismarck had not yet "edited" the King's telegram.

However, as Verdy de Vernois (my principal authority for this period) placidly remarks, "Things are apt to be overlooked in an emergency." It was uncommonly lucky that the order for mobilisation (which of course is

not necessarily the declaration of war) arrived just two hours later. Directly after the receipt of this order the detachment of troops in Saarbrücken, within two miles of the frontier, marched out (the next morning) to their headquarters to pick up their war-equipment and reserves.

Now the townspeople had no knowledge of these administrative details, and at once the wildest rumours were afloat, and something like a panic prevailed. This latter was only partially allayed when the regiments actually detailed to occupy Saarbrücken marched into the town a few hours later; but before this the railway-people, with more zeal than discretion, had torn up their own rails in two places, and it is probable that the bridge would have been blown up could any powder have been found.

On the Luxembourg frontier the same needless destruction occurred. No one seems to have thought that the break-down gangs would be required at once to repair the absurd damage. For two or three days after the mobilisation, Saarbrücken rivalled Hong Kong as a source of rumours. First, the town was occupied by the French; then it was not occupied by them nor likely to be; the French army was advancing, it was not advancing, and so forth, until at last General von Goeben, commanding the district, was obliged to telegraph himself on the morning of the 17th for a categorical answer to the question, "Is Saarbrücken occupied, or is it not?" for it might very well have happened that the troops having marched out no others had come in to take their places, or the town might only contain the civil population. It so happened that Prussian troops had held it all the time, but the responsible staff-officer had forgotten to mention the fact to those whom it might concern

in the district. This was not, however, the fault of the Prussian troops, as they were reporting direct to headquarters in Berlin, and also to their own immediate superior, who, in sending on the gist of the messages to his general, omitted to state their origin, and the headquarters at Berlin had other things to think out, nor indeed was it their work to notify the local commander of the operations in his own district. But does not this clearly show how even the best laid plans can miscarry when the nation has not been trained to understand the operations of war, and to keep cool heads in an emergency? Civilians should be sufficiently familiarised with the contingencies arising from a declaration of war to understand how dangerous unfounded or exaggerated reports can be; and soldiers should be taught that the first thing to be done is to give the clearest possible statement of facts to the most responsible civilians, and to request them to keep quiet and not to make bad worse by hysteria.

Meanwhile it occurred to someone that it would be a good thing to blow up, or otherwise damage, the line between Saargemund and Bitsch on French soil, and a lieutenant of Uhlans, with a few troopers and railway-men, was dispatched for this purpose, but without definite instructions where to go or what to do when they got there.

To begin with, they could not get a map of the country in Saarbrücken, but they managed to scrape together a few crowbars, some dynamite, and some loose powder in a bag, and thus equipped they set off on their vague errand. From Saarbrücken to the railway in question is about twelve miles, a difficult country certainly for it is mountainous, but one would imagine a cavalry-man could have learned something of the ground he

was quartered near, and that, properly led, the distance could have been covered by the men in four or five hours at the very most. It took them exactly two days to find the railway, and the damage done by the wrecking-party could have easily been repaired in a couple of hours.

Curiously enough von Verdy gives the subaltern's name and quotes the case, if without praise, equally without disapproval. Major Kunz, another authority to whom we owe *THE HISTORY OF THE GERMAN CAVALRY IN FRANCE IN 1870-71* (one of the most remarkable books the campaign has produced) conceals this officer's name and is rather severe in his comments on him.

As for myself, when I saw the ground in question and realised the whole affair, I can only say that I "was unequal to the occasion," and felt that the only thing which could be bracketed with this performance was Mark Twain's ascent of the Riffelberg.

If you recollect, as I did at that moment, another ride made by a British officer in India you will still further appreciate the Uhlan's achievement. I mean the occasion when, at a certain point near the Sutlej, Lord Gough, having just received the Sikhs' declaration of war, turned to one of his aides-de-camp and pointing to Tapp's Nose, a mountain five thousand feet above the plains and forty miles away, said these words only: "Ride and fetch 'em."¹ Right over the Sewaliks, hills nearly twelve hundred feet high, and through the great jungles of the Doon, this officer, one of the "stupid British, horse-racing lot," rode without a check, reached his destination in five hours, just as night was falling,

¹ The 29th were quartered at Kansauli close to Tapp's Nose.

delivered his orders, and the regiment promptly marched the next morning.

Now the Englishman had to find his way alone through a roadless, mapless country over ground completely unknown to him, while the German was never further away from his garrison-town than a dozen miles, or he ought not to have been; also a map of the country he might be required to work over should have formed an essential part of his equipment.

To return to the history of the blunders made at the beginning of the Franco-Prussian campaign: away to the eastward, in the mountainous stretch between Saarbrücken and Weissenburg, and thence across the Rhine valley, confusion reigned supreme. The space available for the masses of troops expected was very restricted, and it was particularly essential that timely warning of the enemy's approach should be given. Of organisation to this end, however, there is but little trace, although the German position would have been seriously endangered had a body of French troops penetrated through the mountains and wheeled in eastward upon their right wing.

But though this obvious peril failed to provide for its prevention, it started into vigorous existence the usual crop of alarming rumours. Already on July 23rd it was bruited about that eighty thousand French were concealed in the forests, prepared to fall next morning on the weak Bavarian detachment, and troops were hurriedly marched and countermarched to meet these chimerical levies.

A glance at the map ought to have satisfied any staff-officer of even moderate intelligence that nothing of the kind could possibly be true, and that even if true it could not essentially matter, since eighty thousand

men could neither advance nor deploy for action in such cramped country in less than forty-eight hours; yet this improbability was believed and accepted as fact by officers of some standing and experience. Here again is a proof of the necessity for the training that guards against men being thrown off their balance by a sudden upheaval of their usual routine of existence. If they were consistently educated to understand the meaning and unhesitatingly to accept the weight of responsibility, to think exactly and clearly, to weigh evidence carefully and to judge its worth swiftly, such blunders as these could not occur, because the reports which gave rise to them would be at once appraised at their true value.

Look, for instance, at the evidence on which were based those I am describing at the moment. On July 23rd an officer's patrol sent in the following report: "A workman ejected from Strasburg states that eighty thousand men are collected in that city, and began their advance towards Weissenburg on July 22nd. West of Haguenau there are six thousand infantry and cavalry. Civilians employed in the Bienwald district report thirty-six thousand men at Siegen, eight miles south-east of Weissenburg." On July 24th the Bavarian division reported: "A Bavarian sapper, returning to duty from Strasburg, says that there are forty thousand men in Bitsch. A deserter says that the troops marching to Bitsch took more than an hour to file past his hiding-place, and that Turcos were among them." Where was his hiding-place? Apparently no one took the trouble to enquire, or to record its whereabouts if known.

Incidentally it is worth while to point out that Turcos, Algerians, and Zouaves were at once seen all along the frontier from the very first day of

the war; yet there was not a single one of these troops in France at the time, the first being only due to arrive at Marseilles on the 25th, a fact which had been duly notified to all German head-quarters by the General Staff at the commencement of operations. But in the universal excitement prevailing these instructions had been entirely forgotten.

On July 25th the enemy's numbers were still further magnified, but General von Bothmer of the Bavarians in forwarding the reports did at last suggest that the numbers might be exaggerated. Nevertheless the next morning, when General von Gersdorf, commanding the 22nd (Prussian) division, arrived in Landau, he was met with the announcement from Colonel von Thiele, a brigadier, that eighty to ninety thousand French were already massed between Saargemünde and Bitsch, and were to attack Pirmasens on the next day.

Von Gersdorf, just arrived from a long railway journey and wholly ignorant of local positions, etc., could only act on the information received, and at once orders were issued for the German troops to concentrate and meet the apparently pressing danger; as a consequence of this order they crossed the line of advance laid down for the corps appointed to follow them, and the way was prepared for a state of hopeless confusion had this movement been continued. Fortunately some one was wise enough to send in clearer reports; the French, whose total numbers in that particular district never exceeded twenty thousand, showed no intention of advancing to the attack, and in a little while common sense had come to the rescue, the German alarmist movement was countermanded, and absolute chaos averted.

I have called special attention to this one incident as typical of what

was happening along the whole frontier. The civil population, anxious to assist as well as badly scared, brought in the wildest rumours; patrols went out to endeavour to ascertain their truth, saw nothing themselves, and "came back to tea," as Albrecht said of our cavalry scouts on the Modder River. But for all this the rumours were accepted by responsible officers on the spot, and telegraphed on to headquarters, often in such a form as to leave it uncertain whether the senders of the telegrams had been eye-witnesses of the events reported or not. And to make all this foolishness still stranger, it happened that there were many people still alive, and presumably in sufficient possession of their wits, who could remember the days of the Napoleonic wars. Indeed, in my day, when I was at school in Constanx, German boys were extraordinarily well versed in the suffering and loss entailed by those old campaigns and in the history of the various leaders in them, and their several achievements. As this was before the campaign with Austria in 1866 it was no new thing which was now happening, and the knowledge must have been widely spread among the inhabitants of the country generally; moreover all the able-bodied men had done their three years' service in the ranks; and yet in spite of all this, except from a few non-commissioned officers of the Frontier Guards and Forest Police, not a single trustworthy report was brought in in those first days of panic and confusion. Excited men did not even know or recognise the colours of the French uniforms; Lancers were mistaken for Hussars, Infantry of the Line for Zouaves, and so forth. If such curious mistakes are possible in a nation bred and educated amidst wars and alarms of war in a fashion impossible for our island population,

what may we not expect if ever foreign troops should land on our own coasts?

As matters stand now, how many of our local yeomanry, volunteers, cyclists, police, etc., could tell the difference between a French *chasseur à pied* and an ordinary linesman? And yet considering the great difference in the marching powers of the two, it would mean success or disaster if their respective presence was wrongly reported, as the former can move at exactly double the pace of the latter, and could surprise, and possibly destroy troops who would not be expecting an attack for several hours if they had heard they were to meet a line regiment moving at half the speed.

Nothing is more important for a Headquarter Staff than an accurate knowledge of the names and numbers of the regiments opposed to them, as from these indications a good staff-officer, knowing the capabilities and reputation of each of them, can gauge the composition of the whole army which his side will have to fight. It is analogous to the way in which men like Cuvier and Owen could from a bone or two build up correctly the animal to which they belonged. This is a commonplace of military instruction all the world over; yet in the first days of 1870, though several prisoners were taken, never once was the number of the regiment to which they belonged forwarded to headquarters, until at length a sharp special reminder was telegraphed from Berlin to all whom it might concern. It will be worth while to study for a moment the situation, as a whole, as it existed in Germany during the fortnight which elapsed between the declaration of war and the first serious fighting, from July 14th to August 2nd, and compare it with our position in Natal before Sir Redvers Buller's arrival.

The French forces formed part of a regular army properly uniformed and organised in battalions, brigades, etc, commanded by well-known men. It was moving in closed bodies of the strength of a battalion upwards, along well-known roads, bivouacking in masses of from one to ten thousand in the open fields, and all to within ten to twenty English miles of the German outposts. Now you cannot bivouac a brigade in a three-acre field, for instance, and a screen which will hide the glow of the fires on the sky has yet to be invented; yet in spite of such and similar simple aids to reasoning, the men whose business it was to find out the strength, and even the presence, of the enemy sent in very little trustworthy information regarding them. If it be argued in defence that the ground was enclosed and obstructed with woodland, I can only say so much the better for the determined scout who wished to see without being seen; it is easier to detect essential details at two hundred yards than at two thousand, and the chance of discovery is not approximately greater. Further than this the people were polyglot, had enjoyed sixty years of compulsory education on the German side at least; disguise was simple, and the troops moved at not more than two and a half miles an hour.

So much for the difficulties in 1870, and now for the other picture.

Natal possesses great mountain ranges and ravines, is peopled largely by Kaffirs, and owns many settlers of doubtful loyalty. In distinction to the French leaders, the Boer commanders were an unknown quantity as they had really not yet been appointed; while as to distribution no conclusion as to their army-organisation could be drawn since such a thing did not exist. They had no uniforms to distinguish them, and no roads to limit their movements. They

were almost as free and as fast as birds on the wing, and the speed of their manœuvres over, to us, almost unknown country made it impossible to follow them, while above all the distances might be reckoned thus,—multiply those on the German frontier by ten and you will still be well within the mark.

If a highly organised army like that of the Germans could do no better than it did under their easier conditions, with their well educated and intelligent soldier-citizens to aid it, is there any reason to expect that, had they been launched into war in South Africa as we were, that they would have excelled our "poor mercenaries" (the "scum of the nation," "the conscripts of poverty and famine," as they are pleased to call our troops), in the far more difficult circumstances which we had to face?

They have also delighted to make merry over our fighting record and to question the courage of "puny weaklings," pointing to the numerous incidents of surrender and the frequent surprises. Now surrenders of small bodies in the open field are a consequence of certain methods of fighting and certain kinds of ground, and when these conditions recur the phenomenon repeats itself. This our Austrian critics, who have studied their own military history, might be expected to know. But when organised armies fight on an unbroken front ten miles in extent and with ten to twenty thousand men to the mile ready to close all gaps as they occur, though the circumstances which tend to create surrender may arise the opportunity to seize them is not present.

It is a popular idea among the younger generation in Germany that all their soldiers fought like heroes in 1870, and it would go hard with a man who should venture to hint the

reverse. Yet thirty years ago Germans were less reticent, and many an officer has confided to me scenes that were almost incredible, and for which it would be hard to find a parallel in our own annals. Still it must always be remembered that human nature is the same everywhere, and that "skulking" is not unknown, a certain percentage of it, even in the bravest armies.

I could quote many incidents to prove this, but if I did a German critic would possibly challenge my testimony as biased by national feeling; therefore it will be better to cite some taken from German sources, not from those of party polemics but from the serious works of military authors of the highest credit.

Foremost among such men stands Meckel who, if he lives and retains his vigour, must rise to very high command. In a pamphlet entitled *A SUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM (Sommer's Nacht Traum)* written to recall to the younger officers who have not seen war the wide difference between the theories of the manœuvre-ground and the practice of the battle-field, he has described his own first experience in 1870-71. The name of the battle he suppresses, but internal evidence points to Saarbrücken on August 6th, a few days subsequent to the events already touched on.

I recalled my first battle in France. We did not arrive on the field until late in the day, and we crossed it where the fight had been fiercest. I was already used to the sight of the dead and wounded, but was not prepared for what now met my eyes. The field was literally strewn with men who had left the ranks and were doing nothing. Whole battalions could have been formed from them. From one position we could count hundreds. Some were lying down, their rifles pointing to the front, these had evidently remained behind when the more courageous had advanced; others had squatted like hares in the furrows.

Wherever a bush or ditch gave shelter, there were men to be seen who in some cases had made themselves very comfortable indeed. The men nearest me bore on their shoulder-straps the number of a famous regiment. I turned to look at my own men. They began to seem uneasy. Some were pale; I myself was conscious of the depressing effect produced on me by what I saw. If the fire of the breechloader, which we were now to face for the first time, while already its continuous roll sounded in our ears, had so disorganised this regiment, what would happen to us?

During our advance, before we came under any really serious fire, and whilst only the whistle of an occasional bullet could be heard, we saw six men, one behind the other in a long *queue*, cowering behind a tree; afterwards I saw this sight so frequently that I became accustomed to it—who did not? And this, I said to myself, is the result of three years' careful education in the independent use of cover. Would not Frederic the Great's soldiers, who knew nothing of fighting independently, have been ashamed to present such a spectacle to passing troops?

That this formed no isolated instance is further proved from the following account of the fighting at Woerth, which appeared anonymously in the *MILITAIR WOCHENBLATT* but whose author was soon detected by internal evidence.

Our regiment soon received the order to advance. The Fusilier battalion (to which I belonged) moved off in company columns towards the Sauerbach. When we came within range of the enemy's bullets the skirmishing section of my company, which I commanded, was extended, and the other two sections followed, closed, at a short distance behind us. In front of us there was already a line of skirmishers, which appeared to have taken the first slopes of the hilly land lying towards Elsasshausen. After passing over the Sauerbach, where I lost sight of the rest of my company, we were obliged to cross the wide meadow which lies between the Sauer and the foot of the hills; on nearing these hills I saw the skirmishing line in front of me come down the hill at full speed,

evidently, as I thought, followed by the enemy at their heels.

I made my section take up a position in order to detain the pursuing enemy to the utmost. When the repulsed line reached us and had halted, I heard from one of the men (there was no officer present) that the French had attacked them with greatly superior numbers and forced them to retire. We waited, however, in vain to see the French come over the hill,—no one came; there were only some of the enemy to be seen half left in front of us, about five hundred paces distant; nevertheless the men fired for all they were worth, and I tried to prevent this as much as possible. Then there came along the line from the right a summons, given by signs from the officers, to endeavour to storm the heights, and the whole line of skirmishers went up the hill with a tempest of hurrahs and a fabulously rapid fire. Arrived above, we saw dense lines of the enemy's skirmishers, about four hundred paces in front of us, run away with the utmost rapidity and disappear behind the nearest wave of the ground. Why the French ran away from our thin line I cannot conceive; however we followed them as quickly as possible, the men indeed so excited that they could not be prevented firing at random. Then suddenly the advance stopped. We were just in a fold of the ground which allowed no general view; before I could satisfy myself as to the cause of this check, our whole line suddenly turned round, attended to no more orders and ran away, no one being able to discover any explanation for this phenomenon. The fact was, we afterwards learned, that the French had made another attack, with re-inforced swarms of skirmishers, which had repulsed our right wing, but which we had not even seen. After about two hundred paces we succeeded in bringing our running troops to a stand; I still saw no actual enemy, but we kept up uninterruptedly a very hot fire. We now again went forward, after having calmed the men as much as possible. This time the French let us approach to within about two hundred paces and then fired; it was a very critical moment, then—suddenly the enemy's line in its turn wavered, and ran away; we followed shouting and firing all the time.

We had now approached to within about five hundred paces of Elsasshausen, the

point *d'appui* of the French; on our left was the Nieder Wald. Here we received such a hail of bullets that to press forward was impossible, and we all sought cover. A long fire-fight now ensued, and our situation was momentarily becoming more unpleasant. The men looked anxiously round to see if any supports were coming,—but in vain; the officers could hardly keep them still in position owing to the disappearance of many of their comrades, and the duration of the combat which had now lasted several hours; in fact they were thoroughly depressed.

We then distinctly saw some French battalions in close order approaching to the attack. This was too much for the men; they turned about, all our efforts to detain them were in vain, and though we did not actually run away the whole line fell slowly back. We gave way step by step, followed by the attacking enemy. I looked upon the battle as lost, for there were no reserves to be seen which could have supported us. We had already retired some hundred and fifty paces in this manner when all at once we heard sounded "*The whole line will advance*," and on all sides the call was taken up by the buglers. This gave the men fresh courage and their retreating movement ceased; at the same moment we saw some closed battalions of Wurtembergers approaching, which was sufficient to send us all forward with renewed life. We advanced against the enemy with ever-increasing speed. The French turned once more, hesitated, turned again, and ran.

This proved to be the end of the battle; the French had broken and run, and the Germans remained the victors, more by good luck apparently than by good management.

In neither of the above instances did the troops specified form part of a beaten army, or even of one very heavily engaged. It was merely fair average fighting, neither more nor less, and was very different from what happened when things for a time went badly, as at Gravelotte and Mars la Tour. Yet who can doubt that these men, "squatting like hares in the furrows," would not very readily have acceded to the invita-

tion to "put up their hands" had the general situation allowed or favoured their being surrounded?

With reference to current military opinion as expressed by the correspondents of our daily Press, is it not obvious that such incidents are likely to occur when these correspondents are doing their best to shake the confidence of the men in their leaders by unrestrained and ignorant criticism of matters beyond their intellectual horizon? The Germans and French had been frightened into cowardice by the gruesome tales of the terrible power of the new weapons which had been diligently circulated throughout the Fatherland by unprincipled sensation-mongers, and they skulked and stayed behind because they went into action with the idea that all frontal attacks were foredoomed to failure from the outset. Their business, as they understood it, was primarily to take good care of their own skins, and they were only conscious of showing a high degree of individual intelligence in the efforts they made to avoid all danger.

Hence such scenes as those described will, and must, remain common on every battle-field, whatever the nationality of the troops, until the instruction of tactics is based on the firm ground of mathematical investigation, and not on the wild assertions of neurotic inventors born of the result of experiments at the target.

With reference to the many surprises which have befallen our own troops it is curious that their frequency has been very largely due to the influence of German example in 1870; and had the latter been in our place in South Africa I am inclined to believe they would have proved even more unfortunate than ourselves.

In 1870 the German cavalry so quickly acquired a crushing superiority

over that of their enemy that they swept the country for miles in front of the infantry, who for greater convenience and freedom of movement soon abandoned the use of their usual elaborate precautions on the march. This it was perfectly safe for them to do against a slow-moving, uniformed army, because when the cavalry had once scoured a whole wide district and found it vacant, there was no possibility of any dangerous bodies of troops suddenly occupying it, and consequently the practice of trusting all to the care of the cavalry insensibly crept into all armies.

Unfortunately in South Africa it was the cavalry which was the slowest force in respect to the enemy, and the fact that, say, at ten in the morning, ground was reported clear was no guarantee that at noon it might not be swarming with Boers who had raced in twenty miles whilst our men had moved perhaps eight.

Then further there was the difficulty of distinguishing between the effusively loyal colonist who only waited for the disappearance of our troops to take down, or dig up, his rifle and become a dangerous enemy on flank or in rear, and the men we could, as the event proved, really trust.

When the Franc-Tireurs arrived on the scene in 1870 the conditions of warfare became more like those at present rife in South Africa, and the surprises of patrols and small bodies up to the size of a company or squadron became by no means uncommon. In all, Major Kunz tabulates from official diaries no fewer than forty-six of these incidents, in only six of which did the Germans succeed in beating off their assailants; and the total casualty-list under this heading for six months amounted to thirty officers, six hundred and forty-

three men and eight hundred and fifty horses, figures which compare very unfavourably with our own losses when the far wider area of ground covered by us with the same numbers, and the rapidity of the Boers' movements added to their absolute knowledge of every inch of hill and veldt are brought into consideration, and finally by their practice of appropriating our dead soldiers' uniforms and passing themselves off as our own men.

In the face of these facts, and considering the tremendous responsibility of those who disseminate "wisdom" which George Eliot once defined as "dwelling in minds attentive to their own" (thoughts and theories), would it not be better, and at least more humane, if they gained more accurate "knowledge," which, in the same sentence, she says is "replete with the thoughts of other men;" if, that is to say, they should study sound military history, understand something at least of military mathematics, learn how to weigh evidence, reason out tangled problems, and should refrain from turning their fellow-men into cowards, a proceeding which has and will cost the life of many a good fellow, who has to lead, in the past and future? Might it not also be well for those in authority over us to ignore the men in the street, both at home and abroad, who constitute themselves as amateur critics, and to fearlessly follow sound precedent in dealing with rank disloyalty, as the Germans dealt with the French Franc-Tireurs? It is unpleasant counsel perhaps, but it saves life in the end on both sides; and a good many men and officers we could ill spare would be alive now for further useful work had this policy been rigorously enforced from the beginning.

F. N. MAUDE,

Lt.-Col. late Royal Engineers, p.s.c.

FORECASTS OF THE FUTURE.

ALTHOUGH its first year has now passed into the domain of history, social and political seers are still engaged in casting the new century's horoscope. Not only the Utopian romancers, whom we always have with us, but even more sober and practical minds are, at the opening of fresh eras, tempted to make experiments in prophecy. The twentieth century loomed so big with portents for humanity that it was inevitable its signs of the times should be closely scanned for indications of the direction which progress was likely to take during its course. All through the past year, for instance, Mr. H. G. Wells has been laboriously expounding his generally entertaining and often curious ANTICIPATIONS in the pages of a monthly review, and has now republished them in a substantial volume. It is to be feared that Mr. Wells has made, for a prophet, the very serious mistake of too minutely condescending to particulars (to use the Scottish legal phrase); and hence, while some of his predictions may prove happy guesses at the probable trend of events, others, more fanciful and less fortunate, have no better prospect of realisation than the mechanical social arrangements devised by the late Mr. Edward Bellamy for the New Boston of the year 2000.

But other serious prophets have been in the field, and during the past few years a number of forecasts of Britain's future have been made, some of which had no special reference to the new chronological cycle down whose grooves the great world

is now spinning. They are nevertheless of more than usual interest in view of streams of tendency which are not only attracting general attention, but in some quarters causing much concern.

In the domain of scientific progress, certain conclusions as regards the course of events during the present century are almost obvious. That electricity will be the chief mechanical power of the twentieth century, as steam has been that of the nineteenth; that before many years are over we shall probably be travelling at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, and upwards, by rail, and at thirty miles an hour, or more, by motor-car on ordinary roads; that, as one effect of the increasing speed of locomotion our cities will, as Mr. Wells points out, become more diffused, so that the suburbs of London may spread over about a third of the area of England; that the problem of aerial locomotion will be solved before the century is old,—if indeed M. Santos-Dumont has not already solved it—and air-cars become as common as motor-cars are now; that the approaching exhaustion of our coal-fields will bring into use fresh kinds of fuel and new methods of generating heat,—these are all possibilities of the future which need no great imaginative power or phenomenal acuteness of vision to foresee. It is certain that the century will do wonders in economising both time and labour, by means of new mechanical inventions alike for the workshop, travel, and the household. The anticipation of one writer that before the century's close every family,

however humble, will have its own motor-car, seems over-sanguine; were the prediction realised it might entail the gradual atrophy of the human organs of locomotion, a result hardly desirable.

In the political sphere there are, unhappily, no indications at present visible that the new century will usher in the Golden Age of Universal Peace, and men have almost ceased to predict the coming of the Millennium. War is doubtless revolutionising its methods, but it has not (with all respect to M. Jean de Bloch) become impossible. Imperial Federation may find its full fruition even while the century is yet young. There is little doubt also that the movement among the Great Powers towards what Mr. Benjamin Kidd calls the Control of the Tropics, will complete itself by the annexation of all the hitherto unappropriated portions of the earth's surface. Every possible land-claim for posterity, even those centring upon the as yet undiscovered poles, will probably have been, as Lord Rosebery calls it, pegged out before the year 1902 is turned. "With the filling up of the temperate regions," says Mr. Kidd, "and the continued development of industrialism throughout the civilised world, the rivalry and struggle for the trade of the Tropics will, beyond doubt, be the permanent underlying fact in the foreign relations of the Western nations in the twentieth century." This conclusion can hardly be disputed.

Turning our glance homeward again, questions as to the probable advent of Socialism have been asked and variously answered, according to the proclivities of the prophet who gives the answer. There are those who assure us that the tide has now set in, if not for the full flood of Social Democracy, at least for a more

or less complete inundation of Municipal Socialism. A close and impartial review of the course of recent events will, however, suggest many doubts as to whether this, after all, is the direction in which social evolution will lead us. It would need something like a miraculous upheaval, a revolutionary cataclysm, to establish Social Democracy in the Seats of the Mighty during the present century. Ten years ago Socialism appeared to be much nearer realisation than it is to-day. Its advocates then had the popular ear; the working-classes were much taken with their glowing pictures of the future, and in the absence of any effective reply the Social Revolution seemed at hand. But since then the proposals of the Socialists have been subjected to a sharp fire of criticism from more than one quarter, and the fallacies of Marx have been so thoroughly riddled that they are now discarded even by Socialists themselves. Mr. Bernard Shaw announced some time ago, on behalf of the Fabians, that this influential section of the school had disowned the doctrines of their founder. Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the leader of the English Social Democrats, has, after more than twenty years of active propagandist effort, both in the press and on the platform, retired dispirited from his post, despairing of the success of a class-warfare in this country. Even the Social Democrats of Germany have very materially modified their programme; several of their leaders have announced that they no longer look for the realisation of their Utopian dreams, and Edward Bernstein has almost demolished Karl Marx. We may have various trials of Municipal Socialism, or gas-and-water Socialism, as it has been disparagingly called, during this century; but there are not wanting indications that the workers are beginning

to realise that a pure Socialism and liberty stand at opposite poles, and that increasing State-control means increasing curtailment of the natural rights of the citizen. If this conviction once takes hold of the working-classes, as Dr. Schäffle years ago predicted it would, there is likely to be a revolt against further progress towards Socialism. We may be carried by new political currents further away from Social Democracy in the new century than we were in the old. That which Mr. Herbert Spencer spoke of as the coming slavery, may not come at all; but instead thereof, we may see new efforts to reconcile liberty with that equality of opportunity which professes to be one of the chief aims of Socialism, but which ought to be attainable without the irritating espionage and interference of the State.

In the economic sphere more serious portents are, however, threatening us. The late Dr. Charles Pearson, in his *NATIONAL LIFE AND CHARACTER*, first published some ten years back, predicted that the Yellow Men of the Far East would increase and multiply to such an extent as to overrun the Western Continents, and that their peaceful but resistless invasion would seriously peril Britain's future. To some extent this prediction, though much criticised at the time, is in process of fulfilment. Both China and Japan are now competing with us in various industries, while Chinamen are already overrunning the American States and even invading our own labour-market. A French writer, M. Gustave le Bon, has gone even further than Dr. Pearson in this line of pessimistic prophecy. He predicts that the opening of China to Western civilisation will be followed by Pekin's becoming the "bourse of the world," and that soon "European workmen will be begging for work on any

terms, owing to the deluge of Chinese low-priced labour." The spectre of the Yellow Peril has begun to materialise somewhat menacingly of late, though these alarming vaticinations may prove exaggerated.

It is in connection with the industrial and economic changes which appear to threaten our commercial supremacy, that the more thoughtful forecasts of our country's future will probably attract most attention. In view of the increasing keenness and success of foreign competition, and the ousting of British manufactures from various markets, what fate do the signs of the times portend for Great Britain? We can no longer claim to be the workshop of the world. Other nations have gone into the business, and in future we can only expect a share of the world's orders. The rapidly growing excess of imports over exports, though partially explained by what are called invisible exports, points to a pending change in the commercial relations of our own and other countries. What is the nature of that change? Has our industrial supremacy gone for ever? Must we write up *Ichabod* over our factories and ship-yards? Is the new world, as has been hinted by one writer, about to buy up the old, and will the centre of the Universe be transferred from London to New York? There are not wanting doleful prophets who are ready to answer these questions in the affirmative, and who predict the rapid industrial decadence of Great Britain. But on the other hand, at least two recent writers, who have been closely watching economic tendencies, tell us that, although a change is pending, it will not necessarily be to the disadvantage of our country, and may indeed be greatly to its advantage.

The two distinctive forecasts of Britain's future which these writers

have put forward are novel, plausible, and ingenious; and they seem to be deserving of more consideration than the majority of guesses at the future which the birth of the new century has evoked. Mr. Marcus Dorman, in a recent work on the tendencies of popular thought, denies that manufacture is, as was generally supposed, the backbone of English industry. Analysing the census figures of the occupations of the people in 1891, he shows that the proportion of the population which lives by making goods for exportation is only from ten to twenty per cent., and as this proportion was then decreasing, it is probably much less now. The economic tendency in these days is to manufacture nearer the raw material than hitherto. Many of our own capitalists have established cotton-mills in India, and those of America have built factories in the Southern States, which are competing successfully with the older mills in Massachusetts. Manufacture will, Mr. Dorman maintains, "gradually leave this country and seek its home on the site Nature has indicated by her raw products." England will still remain in the business, only her capitalists will carry it on in other lands; we shall supply alike the capital, the brains, and the hands for factories and works all over the world. Both capitalists and workers will in future make their money abroad, but they will return home to spend it. Though we cease to manufacture in Great Britain, we shall direct and control the lion's share of the industry and commerce of the world. Most of the monetary business will be transacted here, and London will remain the world's financial centre. In short, in course of time, Great Britain will become a "huge market clearing-house and bank, where the majority of its workers will be engaged in exchange,

or in organising and managing industries carried on elsewhere." The British workman will not altogether find his occupation gone when this change comes. "The English artisan thus displaced will," our prophet tells us, "gradually assume some other rôle in life, developing into perhaps an administrator or director of mechanical labour abroad, for which he has already proved himself superior to any other race, or will be occupied in the purely financial and executive work at home." In this particular the prediction has been in course of fulfilment for some years past. Skilled artisans from Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the north of the Tweed have been in demand as foremen and managers of mills established mainly by British capital in North and South America, India, China, Japan, and Russia, while numbers of our clever mechanics and engineers have gone out to take charge of machinery in pretty nearly every foreign land. They obtain good salaries, which enable them in a few years' time to return to their native country. To facilitate a greater employment of British workmen in this way still further attention will, of course, have to be given by us in future to secondary and technical education. To expert and educated young workers the prospect so opened, though it may entail some years of residence abroad, is by no means unattractive.

A similar forecast, but varied in some of its features, was drawn by the late Mr. William Clarke in an article published in *THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW* some months back. Mr. Clarke appears to agree with Mr. Dorman so far as to hold that our country will become less and less a manufactory for the world; nor does he think that our industrial supremacy will be saved by any development of markets in our colonies. They also are beginning to manufac-

ture for themselves. Thus, Canada is entering the lists as a competitor in iron and steel, and in some specialities of machinery. India, though not, of course, a colony, but only a dependency, has for years been a competitor with us in textiles, and Lancashire has felt keenly the activity of the Bombay mills. What is more, our colonies are quite as ready to buy their wares from foreign nations as from the mother country,—like us they seek the cheapest markets. What South Africa may yet do for us it is hard to say. We have there, it is true, great undeveloped estates; but our older South African colonies have also begun to manufacture for themselves, and they too patronise our competitors, America and Germany.

Mr. Clarke's conclusion, from a careful review of existing economic conditions, is that schemes for maintaining Britain's industrial supremacy "are all doomed to failure," and that, in course of time, "we, in this island country, shall retire from the race?" What then? Is industrial ruin the fate in store for the old country? No; like Mr. Dorman, Mr. Clarke, taking an independent view of his own, has consolations for us in the changing conditions of the century. He sees a new, and in some respects even a brilliant future for our country. Britain is to become, is even now becoming, the "pleasure-ground of English-speaking peoples, the summer-resort to which increasing multitudes will repair to find rest and recreation and to drink in those ancient historic influences so greatly needed by a not very imaginative population living in new countries void of human interest, devoted to daily gain, and dominated by rather commonplace and at times distinctly sordid and vulgar aims." Thus, according to this hypothesis, the mass of the English common people,

without being relegated necessarily to entirely servile positions, "will more and more tend to be the ministers in some way of this new rich class of English-speaking peoples, who will repair, for purposes of health or culture, to their ancestral seats." There is even now to be seen a decided movement, increasing yearly in strength and volume, in this direction. Crowds of wealthy Americans and Colonials are in the habit of repairing to the old country for health or pleasure year after year. A number of American millionaires, like Mr. Astor and Mr. Carnegie, have now settled residences in this country, while many others, and even visitors from the Continent, also make long annual sojourns in our land. Every summer the number of American visitors to spots rich in natural beauty or historic associations, in England, Scotland and Ireland, is increasing, and at some of these places they even outnumber the English visitors. Of course they usually make a longer or shorter stay in the metropolis. Rich Americans seem to find the social amenities and pleasures of life more to their taste in this country than in their own, and so each year more and more of them are setting up permanent establishments here. The multiplication in late years of huge hotels in London and in most of our pleasure-resorts is largely due to these American visitors. These facts testify to the growing popularity of Great Britain as a world's pleasure-resort.

The increasing attention given to sanitary and hygienic improvement throughout the country, and the corresponding fall in the death-rate, are other circumstances enhancing the attractions of these islands for foreign visitors and residents. Mr. Clarke remarks on this prospect that, as compared with our black, dingy industrialism, "it will not be unwelcome to

many. Artists, quiet people who are weary of the present din, the growing number of Ruskin's followers, would not be sorry to see once more a clean, healthy England, cleared of her pall of smoke, with pure streams and pleasant red-tiled towns instead of our black 'hell-holes.' They would not be sorry to see the growth of the London octopus arrested and the general encroachment of sprawling cities on green nature stopped." Along with the increasing tendency of men of wealth and culture to resort to this country for pleasure and health, there would be a large growth of the professional, artistic, and literary classes, as well as of the shopkeeping, catering, and other trades which live by administering to those who have money to spend.

Of the political aspects of these predicted changes it is unnecessary here to speak, further than to say that the author of this forecast considers the new social conditions unfavourable to Democracy. On the other hand, however, with the check to industrialism, and to the growth of factories, many of the social problems that now perplex us, such as the housing-question, would tend to their own solution. Britain would, politically and industrially, have entered upon an epoch of rest. This picture of our social future, it will be seen, might easily be made to fit in with Mr. Dorman's forecast of the industrial and commercial future, though it is not drawn entirely on the same lines. Not only so, but Mr. Wells also, in his *ANTICIPATIONS*, working on still other grounds, leads his readers to expect a state of society very much resembling that of Mr. Clarke's social forecast. He anticipates a large increase in the wealthy shareholding class, the class which lives upon its investments in all parts of the world, without taking

a direct, active part in the management or working of the enterprises from which its members derive their income. Along with this there will be an enormous growth of the expert engineering class, for Mr. Wells's main point is the remarkable multiplication of machines for saving labour and time which is coming. In a "world which is steadily abolishing locality," he thinks, "there will be no great, but many rich." Then "the practical abolition of distances and the general freedom of people to live anywhere they like over large areas, will mean very frequently an actual local segregation." These segregations will be literary, artistic, scientific, engineering, and so on. "The best of the wealthy will gravitate to their attracting centres," and "unless some great catastrophe break down all that man has built, these great kindred groups of capable men and educated, adequate women must be the element finally emergent amidst the vast confusions of the coming time." The prospect, therefore, is hopeful, even according to Mr. Wells, who writes as regards the great masses of the people in a somewhat pessimistic tone, and goes so far as to predict the passing of Democracy with the first great war, and the emergence of a New Republic of Intellect.

Whether the prognostications by Messrs. Dorman and Clarke of Britain's industrial future, or those of Mr. Wells, will be considered attractive, or the reverse, will depend upon the turn of the mind which contemplates them. Of course, no one need be too ready to accept such generalisations as certain to be verified, for even when a stream of tendency appears to have set strongly in one particular direction, at that very moment cross-currents may be

making which will either divert it from its goal, or cause it to break up, like the gulf-stream. Hence, though some of the predictions of our social and political seers may be fulfilled, or partially fulfilled, very few will be carried out wholly, nor is any one of them likely to be realised to the letter.

In any case, if our sons strive to do their duty in the present, and to equip themselves to the utmost as socially efficient units of our civilisation, whatever direction that civilisation may take, they need have no fear of their country's future. It may be something very different from even the most plausible and probable forecast yet put forward, though certain elements of more than one such may be woven into its fabric. We may say of these forecasts, as Dr. Pearson wrote of his own somewhat more pessimistic predictions a dozen or so years ago, "Should it be so that something like what the Norsemen conceived as the twilight of the

gods is coming upon the earth, and that there will be a temporary eclipse of the higher powers, we may at least prepare for it in the spirit of the Norsemen, who, as the *YNGLINGA SAGA* tells us, deemed that whether God gave them victory or called them home to Himself, either award was good. . . . Simply to do our work in life, and to abide the issue, if we stand erect before the eternal calm as cheerfully as our fathers faced the eternal unrest, may be nobler training for our souls than the faith in progress." While bracing ourselves to meet thus manfully any changes which impend there is no sufficient reason for a feeling of despondency, or even of apprehension, as regards the future. We have naturally entered the twentieth century with both hopes and fears for our country; but who shall say that the indications, fairly looked in the face, do not give us most ground for hope?

JESSE QUAIL.

HIS LAST LETTER

[This letter came into my hands among the papers of the late eminent judge, Sir John Molland, whose standard work upon THE LAW OF DOMICILE has made his name familiar to every student of English jurisprudence. The writer was his elder brother, Colonel Molland, of the East India Company's Service, who was in command of the 115th Bengal Native Infantry, when they mutinied at Sigrapore on their march to Delhi. Colonel Molland was one of the few officers who escaped on that occasion; he subsequently served with great distinction at the siege of Delhi, and was killed, in the assault on that city, at the head of the column which carried the Water Bastion. Miss Danvers, who is mentioned in the letter, afterwards made a very brilliant marriage, and was a prominent figure in London society some forty years or so ago.—J. B. H.]

*The Ridge before Delhi,
September 13th, 1857.*

My Dear Jack,

Our correspondence of late years has been so very intermittent, through my own fault, no doubt, for I have no wish, at the present moment, to say anything which can, by any possibility, be twisted into a reproach—so, you may be sure that, if I thought you were in the least to blame for it, I should not make any allusion to the subject; but it has been so very intermittent that you will, perhaps, be surprised to hear from me now.

You will be still more surprised, when you learn the especial distinction I am conferring on you; for this epistle, wildly scrawled with a stumpy quill, by the light of one wretched candle perpetually spluttering with frizzling flies, will probably be my last effort at prose composition.

The General has at last made up his mind, or had it made up for him,—it doesn't make much difference which—to prefer a chance of defeat to the certainty. We assault to-morrow at daybreak, instead of waiting till the sick-list, which has already reduced our effective strength by one half, has grown big enough to absorb the whole of his command. We assault, I say, to-morrow at daybreak, and we've got to win,—we shall win, unless the Pandies shoot straight enough to account for every man in our force, because, from what I've seen of our fellows, I'm convinced that there is no way to beat them except by exterminating them. To-morrow, I repeat, we must and shall be masters of Delhi; but, how many of us will be left to congratulate ourselves on that victory is another question, and one upon which I'm not at all prepared, or inclined, to prophesy. There is a grim suggestiveness about the orders we shall have to read to the men presently, when they parade: "No man is to leave the ranks to attend to the wounded. The wounded, officers and men alike, must remember that, if we are victorious, they shall receive every possible attention, at the earliest opportunity; if we fail, wounded and unwounded must, alike, prepare for the worst." But we shall not fail, we cannot afford to fail; the lives of all the Europeans between Peshawur and Calcutta depend on our carrying the city to-morrow, and we will carry it. The odds are, as nearly as we can calculate, five to one against us, and the five are

fighting from behind stone walls; but we have right, British pluck, and Nicholson on our side, and that more than evens the odds.

I trust that England will some day realise and appreciate the work that our little army has been, and is, doing here. For nearly three months they have been fighting, every day and most of every day, against tremendous odds. They have only laid aside their muskets to labour with pick and shovel in the trenches, till they dropped from sheer fatigue. Fever, dysentery, and cholera have laid their grip on one man out of every two, but there is no complaining, and there is no giving in. I cannot sum up their exploits better than by saying that I shall start for the fearful ordeal of to-morrow in absolute confidence that some of us will stand in the King's Palace as conquerors. But, who among us, and how many? And I can hardly count upon being one.

Nor can I say that I mind about myself, very much. Of course, life is dear to every man, and I am sorry for the grief it will cause to so many of you at home; but my heart broke when the dear old regiment mutinied. Oh, Jack! How could they? How could they? When I think of all they had endured and wrought together,—of those forced marches in 1845, so nobly borne,—of that night of over-wrought waiting on the field of Ferozeshah, when, amid the heaps of still bleeding slain, friend and foe sank to rest within pistol-shot of each other,—of that resolute advance through the baffling jungle at Chillianwallah,—of all the varied incidents of the fifteen years I have spent with the colours in peace and war,—how could they? How could they? I grow almost hysterical when I think about them, but I won't cross out what I've written, so that you may know that, if I do fall to-morrow, you must not

grieve for me, as for one taken from life when it was sweet to him. But, please God, I sha'n't get my death from a 115th musket! That would be a little too hard on me, when there are thirty other regiments of mutineers in Delhi.

Perhaps you are surprised at my picking you out to receive this "last dying speech and confession," since, gloze it over as you will, that is what it amounts to; but one of my chief reasons for doing so is because I haven't heard from you lately. You can have no idea what a torture my English letters have been to me for the past four months. Of course, it wasn't the writers' fault; they didn't know what they were doing, and could never have guessed that, by writing in high spirits, they were not doing their best to keep me in high spirits too; but there has been something supremely horrible in their cheerful, prattling gossip about dances and concerts and such things, at a time when we never went to bed without expecting that our bungalows would be ablaze before morning.

If you had to watch by the death-bed of a dear old friend, you would not like the people next door to choose that night to give a dance; and English India, since the storm burst at Meerut, has been one vast chamber of death, where, however, the watchers cannot count on a much longer life than the dying. I can assure you, Jack, during the terrible ordeal of this summer, my home-letters have been more of a pain than a pleasure to me.

Don't think that I'm one whit less fond of you. I love you all as much as ever, from Aunt Elspeth in her moss-grown Galloway manse, to Jessie's latest infant phenomenon in her smart *bassinette*; but, one and all, they have got upon my nerves to a frightful extent,—though, on that score, it is

the merest justice to acquit Jessie's baby and her immediate contemporaries—while they thought they were cheering the lonely hours of my Indian exile; but, if they had only known! The day I got Jessie's minute account of Madge's wedding, I saw the murdered bodies of poor Duberfield's wife and child lying by the still glowing ashes of his bungalow; on the day which brought me Nellie's "full, true and particular" narrative of the Brendons' fancy-dress ball, we buried Tom Hardy, the brightest, jolliest subaltern who ever neglected his regimental duties to go pig-sticking. The contrast of their frivolous gaieties at home with the deadly earnestness of our struggle for life out here has thrown me out of touch and sympathy with my usual home-correspondents. I know it's foolish of me; they meant nothing but what was kind and loving, and for the world I would not have them know what I feel; but, as I said, I'm thrown out of touch with them, and I can't sit down and write to them as fully and frankly as I should like, just now; so, I'm writing to you.

I can see you, dear old Jack, with a suspicious, Old Bailey sort of smile curling up the corners of your legal mouth, as you say to yourself, "He must be very much in a corner, before he's driven to plead such a lame excuse as that"; but it is my real motive, or, if I have another, it doesn't weigh with me so much, at least, I don't think it does, and I've no reason for attempting to deceive you *now*. But I do not see why I need be ashamed of the other reason even if it were my only one, which, as I've already told you, it isn't.

I rather gathered from some expressions Mrs. Jack,—I will not say "your wife," because I want to dissociate you as much as possible from the opinions which you must teach

her not to hold—from some expressions Mrs. Jack used in her last letter, that she was inclined to think that Mary Danvers had treated me badly, when I was over in England on furlough. I don't want to turn mawkish or sentimental, so I won't appeal to any touching recollections of our earlier years, but, if we were ever good friends, Jack,—and I cannot remember our ever having been anything else—don't let her think so. What's the good of a husband, if he can't make his wife think as he does? If I fall to-morrow—and the sound of the jackals howling over the carnage of the last sortie reminds me of the likelihood of such an issue without at all increasing my appetite for it—but if I fall, do not allow your wife to let any memory of me come between her and the bravest and unluckiest girl in the world, who has no other friend left; because I'm not worth it,—whatever the partiality of friends and relations may lead them to think about me, I'm not worth it. Besides, I owe Mary Danvers a great deal more pleasure than pain; I owe her some pain, I confess, but it was of my own seeking, whereas the pleasure she bestowed upon me was her own free gift.

Yes, after all this preamble, Jack, I have arrived, at last, at something honest and definite; perhaps, the real, sole object of this letter. I don't want to spend this last night telling my relatives that I love them,—I trust they know that—or promising them to try and do my duty,—I hope they will take that for granted; but, I do beg of you to be kind to Mary Danvers, for my sake. If I live to see her again, which, of course, is possible, and, if she would accept it, which is most improbable, all I possess should be hers; so, at least, let me leave her the one legacy she will not refuse and which she so sorely needs,

the friendship of all who will befriend her for my sake ; and first among that number, Jack, I trust I may reckon you and your wife.

It was not her fault ! It was not her fault ! If I thought that repetition would bring that truth home to you, I would go on writing it, like the text in a copy-book, till the time for falling-in. It really was not her fault.

How was she to guess, in the innocence of her seventeen years, that the withered, grey-moustachioed, middle-aged Indian soldier could care for her, except as an uncle, or, at the utmost, as a father ? So she accepted all my attentions with a frank unquestioning affection, which bore as much resemblance to love on the surface, as it was fatally and hopelessly different from it in reality ; and, when the true state of affairs revealed itself to her, as if an earthquake had opened the ground before her feet, it hurt her even more than it hurt me ; and, God knows, it hurt me badly enough.

Be kind to Mary, Jack, and don't be jealous of her, even if, this last night, my thoughts do turn to her in preference to all my home-circle. She has come in between me and them, and blotted them all out, but she never wished to do anything of the kind ; it's only my folly which has placed her on a pedestal, where she shuts out all the rest of the world from my eyes. My folly,—but, after all, Jack, it's a folly I wouldn't change for wisdom. I ask for no better company in my tent to-night than my memories of her,—of the quiet, rather plain, sharp-nosed little girl with flowing hair, whom Lady Turnbull brought to the Hospital concert,—of the very shy and silent *débutante* in white, whom your wife committed to my charge at that ball of yours, with the request that

I would see that she got plenty of partners,—of the unconventional, jolly little maiden who stayed with you, that summer, at Combe-Martin. If it were not for the sounds outside which warn me that the men are getting their arms ready for the great hazard of to-morrow, I could almost fancy myself back at Combe-Martin now.

Those sweet and bitter days at Combe-Martin ! There was one hat she used to wear there, a perfectly bewitching hat ; I could never see her in it, without feeling an almost irresistible desire to clasp her in my arms, and claim her as mine against all the world. Indeed, at last I had to caution her, to tell her never to wear that particular hat when she was going out with me. "Why ! Don't you think it's pretty ?" "Oh, yes, pretty enough." "Then, why shouldn't I wear it ?" "I can't tell you ; some day perhaps you'll know, or, at least, guess." I wonder if she recollects that conversation ; it was enigmatical enough to fix itself in any one's memory. But how trivial all this is, and what dreadful drivell it must sound to you, Jack !

Still, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of setting down one more picture of her in black and white. It was the day before I sailed, when I forgot everything, my years, my life of exile, her position,—I must have been a brute to have forgotten that—and spoke. Her cry of genuine misery and horror—"What do you mean ? I never thought of that !"—is ringing in my ears still ; even now I can see her bent over the arm of the big chair in your study, sobbing as if her heart would break. No ! Mary Danvers never treated me badly ; I treated her selfishly, brutally,—fiendishly, if you like—I, the man, who should have kept pain

from her, the woman,—I who would gladly have died to save her a single pang.

But it is best as it is. We must march up the breach to-morrow without casting a look back over our shoulders at the world we may never see again. There is an empire to redeem, there are lives, hundreds of lives, of our countrymen and countrywomen in imminent peril. Many there are among us who will find it bitterly hard to turn their backs for ever on wife, on children, on home; had I any prospect of winning Mary's love, the world would seem too bright for me to quit, without such a regret as we, the *enfants perdus* of British rule in India, must not allow ourselves to feel.

My time grows short now, and this candle is guttering its last. Good-

bye dear, dear old Jack! Be kind to Mary Danvers; she is my dying charge to you. Give my love to all at home, from the Scotch aunts to Jessie's wonderful infant, of whom I have heard so much, but whom I shall never see. If they like to add my name to the family tablet in the old church at home, let them carve after it *Fell at Delhi* and nothing more; no man could ask for a nobler epitaph.

Please ask your wife to let Mary know,—if she thinks it will not hurt her too much,—that my love for her has never changed, and never could change, and that I thank the providence of Heaven that has let me know and feel her excellence. And don't forget that I owe her nothing but good.

The men are falling-in.

THE REVIVAL OF A LANGUAGE.

THE modern conception of civilisation seems to involve the agglomeration of communities into vast masses, all governed by the same institutions and all speaking the same language; and there are those who exult in the fact that English, of all competitors, has the best chance to become, in the cant term, a world-speech, doing away with the curse of Babel, to the immense advantage of people who buy and sell. I cannot understand this enthusiasm. Neither the pidgin-English of China, nor the trade-English of West Africa, nor the delectable dialect of the Wall Street broker, kindles in me the least glow of satisfaction. I am a Little Englander in the matter of language; and every extension of a speech beyond the limits in which it originally took shape seems to take from it something of its essential character and beauty. It becomes less and less an appropriate instrument for embodying thought and imagination, and more and more a convenient tool in the business of barter and money-making. Latin and Greek literature ceased to be interesting in proportion as the languages grew cosmopolitan. The great things of the intellectual world have been done mostly by the small communities.

On the other hand, many people in many parts of the world are possessed with the desire to resist the progress of the great steam-rollers that are flattening out racial, local, and parochial differences. They do not want to see, in Musset's phrase, a world beardless and hairless spin through space like a monstrous

pumpkin. In certain cases, as in Finland for example, the struggle has a political complexion; a subject people holds to what it believes will be the key to deliver it from its chains. But in most instances the motives are merely sentimental, a local patriotism such as preserves the speech and the literature of Wales; and the most remarkable of all these revivals, that of the Provençal tongue, is perfectly free from any suggestion of a racial hostility. "I love my village more than thy village, I love my Provence more than thy Province, I love France more than all," writes Félix Gras, one of the leaders in the movement, quoted by Mr. Downer in his excellent little book on Frédéric Mistral.¹ And Mistral himself, so eloquent on the need for fostering the local life, is eloquent too upon the need for racial union.

For the brook must flow to the sea, and the stone must fall on the heap; the wheat is best protected from the treacherous wind when planted close; and the little boats, if they are to navigate safely, when the waves are black and the air dark, must sail together. For it is good to be many, it is a fine thing to say, "We are children of France."

Unluckily, the movement nearest to my mind, the revival of the Gaelic tongue in Ireland, springs under less kindly auspices. Dislike of England as well as love of Ireland enters into it. Nevertheless, the resentment that encourages Irishmen

¹ FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL, POET AND LEADER IN PROVENCE; by Charles Alfred Downer. London, 1901.

to promote national industries, to revive their ancient tongue, and to study their past history and store of legends, is a very much more useful feeling than the resentment which sits sullenly asserting that nothing but the Act of Union stands between Ireland and the millennium. And it would be misleading to assert that the feeling against England, rather than the feeling for Ireland, has been the spring of the movement. Protestants and Unionists have been prominent in it. In Belfast, where the Gaelic League has several thousand members, the president of the League is a Protestant; and one of the best known opponents of Home Rule, the late Dr. Kane, joined the League, saying that he might be an Orangeman, but he did not wish to forget that he was an O'Cahan. And many Irishmen, and others interested in the Celtic revival, will find in Mr. Downer's account of Mistral and the Félibrige a suggestive parallel which I shall endeavour to draw out, while giving some account of the Félibrige itself.

The Provençal speech, once the vehicle of a great literature, had lapsed, after the devastation of the Albigenian wars, into the position of a mere patois. A few peasant songs were still written in it, and before the efforts of Mistral and his fellows, Jasmin had composed in it poems which won the praise of Sainte-Beuve. Roumanille, a native of Saint-Rémy, born in 1818, conceived definitely the idea of saving from destruction the beautiful *langue d'oc*; and providence threw in his way the instrument. In 1845 he met with Frédéric Mistral, then a boy of fifteen, son of a farmer whose home lay near the village of Maillane in the plain at the foot of the Alpilles. The boy had already a tenderness for the speech in which

his mother sang her songs to him, and the ridicule of his class-mates in the school at Avignon only strengthened this feeling. Already he was trying to render into Provençal the Eclogues of Virgil which recalled so vividly to his mind the life on the plains of Maillane. Then he met Roumanille, who showed him his poems *LI MARGARIDETO* (*Les Marguerites*, the Daisies). Before this, any passage of modern Provençal that he had met in print had been only given as the grotesque dialect of clowns. He went home and began a poem; but his father sent him (like Ovid) from verse-making to study law. He returned home *licencié en droit* (called to the Bar, as we should say), and was given his freedom. Then the young man devoted his life, just fifty years ago, to the glorification of his native tongue. Mistral set to work on the composition of *MIRÉIO*, which appeared in 1859 and was hailed with acclamation by Lamartine, crowned by the Academy, and made the subject of Gounod's opera. The language was lucky; it had found a poet, who from the very first raised modern Provençal literature into an indisputable existence.

Dr. Douglas Hyde, who is the recognised leader of the Gaelic movement in Ireland, as Mistral of the Provençal, has not only collected folk-song, but has written many lyrics, and one charming poetic comedy; but there has not yet been accorded to his work any of the recognition which was from the first bestowed by great writers on the author of *MIRÉIO*, for the excellent reason that hardly any critic is in a position to judge it except through the medium of a translation. Irish literature will have a harder fight to establish itself than the Provençal. The Irish, in so far as they are, or have been, or may

become, a bi-lingual people, are so in a very different sense from the Méridionaux of France. Any one who knows French and Italian can with a dictionary and a few hints spell out the meaning of what Mistral writes; and the idiom, according to Mr. Downer, is so near the French that translation is nearly a substitution of word for word. The spelling too, as in all Latin tongues, offers no difficulty. But Irish is of course a language differing entirely in construction and vocabulary from English, and, to add to the trouble, is encumbered with a system of orthography subtle and logical indeed, but elaborate and cumbrous. The difference in the written character makes another obstacle, though a slight one. Practically, therefore, one may be sure that any prose or poetry produced in Irish will only be read by Gaelic speakers; if it makes its way to English students of literature, it will be only known as the Polish is through the medium of translations. But literature is not produced for export, and the greatest poets have written for a public that was, so far as they knew, strictly limited in numbers. It is safe to say that either of two things would save the Irish tongue from all danger of dying out. The first cannot be looked for,—a prohibition of its use. On the second, therefore, all hopes must be founded,—the appearance of a really great writer who should write in Gaelic.

That is, as has been said, where the revival in Provence was lucky. The poet came to hand at once; and, apart from MIRÉIO no one who reads even in a translation the noble PENITENTIAL PSALM called forth by the war of 1870 can question the genius of its author. But failing this special intervention of providence on behalf of a language, organisation has a

power, and there is much of interest and of profitable example in the proceedings of the Félibrige. What exactly is meant by this mysterious word most people are in doubt. Etymologies from the Greek, the Spanish, the Irish even, have been offered,—*philabros*, *philebraios*, *feligres* (that is *fili ecclesie*), and so on. But the essential fact is that Mistral found an old Provençal hymn describing how the Virgin came upon Jesus among "the seven Félibres of the Law," and adopted the word to designate the seven poets who came together on May 21st, 1854, to consult for the rehabilitation of the Provençal tongue. The Félibrige, or League of the Félibres, was not founded till more than twenty years later.

What then was Mistral's procedure? He took, to begin with, a living language that was spoken about him. The dialect of the troubadours was, it appears, the Limousin. Mistral took the dialect of Saint-Rémy, or rather of Maillane. But the first meetings of the Félibres were held to discuss questions of grammar and orthography; for the language they were to work in was one that had long ceased to be used for any literary purpose. Taking a single dialect for basis, this is what according to Mr. Downer they have done.

They have regularised the spelling, and have deliberately eliminated as far as possible words and forms that appeared to them to be due to French influence, substituting older and more genuine forms,—forms that appeared more in accord with the genius of the *langue d'oc* as contrasted with the *langue d'oïl*. . . . The second step taken arose from the necessity of making this speech of the illiterate capable of elevated expression. Mistral claims to have used no word unknown to the people or unintelligible to them, with the exception that he has used freely of the stock of learned words common to the whole Romance family of languages. These words, too, he transforms more or

less, keeping them in harmony with the forms peculiar to the *langue d'oc*. Hence, it is true that the language of the *Félibres* is a conventional literary language that does not represent exactly the speech of any section of France, and is related to the popular speech more or less as any official language is to the dialects that underlie it.

The same may, however, be said of any written language, and it is to be noted that as the movement has spread the different dialects included in its sphere have asserted their own claims, and since 1874 have been admitted in the competitions. But the point to emphasise is that the language of Mistral is based on a dialect, but a dialect purified and enlarged. For the poet, in his enthusiasm for the tongue of his birthplace, did not limit himself to demonstrating its fitness for literary uses. He spent, Mr. Downer tells us, a quarter of a century "journeying about among all classes of people, questioning workmen and sailors, asking them the names they applied to the objects they use, recording their proverbial expressions, noting their peculiarities of pronunciation, listening to the songs of the peasants." The result was his great dictionary *LOU TRESOR D'OU FELIBRIGE*, which professes to contain all the words used in Southern France, with the dialect forms of each, their etymology, and synonyms. Grammar is included by giving the conjugation of the verbs, etc.; so are explanations as to customs, manners, traditions and beliefs. In short, Mistral made a dictionary not only of the language but of the culture of the people, which aims at including all that is necessary to the understanding of modern Provençal literature.

This brief account indicates sufficiently, I think, the character of the literary language written by the *Félibres*, and the means taken to develop it. The facts have a certain

resemblance to those of the Gaelic revival, but the difference is to the advantage of the Irish. If the Provençal tongue be worth reviving, then the Irish is much more worth reviving, as being the richest in records of any of the old Celtic tongues, any one of which has a continuous history going back for many ages before the dialects of Latin took shape even in common speech. Yet nothing is more hotly debated in Ireland than just this point,—the value of the language. In the summer of 1900 a Vice-Regal Commission sat to enquire into the subject, and the evidence given before it is vastly entertaining. It may be divided into two parts,—the evidence of Dublin University against, and the evidence of other Gaelic scholars in Ireland and on the Continent for the popular study of the language. So far as the outside public can gather, the history of Irish falls into three parts. First, that of the Old Irish, spoken and written before the great Danish invasions of about the ninth century. This tongue survives only in certain glosses on the margin of Latin manuscripts, but its linguistic perfection is the joy of philologists. Dr. Atkinson, the main champion of the Trinity College point of view, would desire to encourage the learning of Irish among students of philology chiefly for the sake of these remnants. Secondly, there is the Middle Irish spoken and written by all men in Ireland, settlers as well as natives, from the tenth century to the close of the sixteenth. In this, which is apparently related to the Old Irish as the tongue of Chaucer is to the Anglo-Saxon, there survives admittedly a very copious literature, much of it probably dating from centuries earlier, but re-shaped into the modified speech. This literature is of undoubted interest to archæologists; but about it two questions are raised. First, is it

desirable that a knowledge of it should form part of an Irishman's education? Secondly, will an Irishman be better qualified to understand it by knowing the existing Gaelic? Upon the first point Dr. Atkinson is emphatic. He is worth listening to, for, unlike Dr. Mahaffy who testified in the same sense, he knows the books about which he is talking; and in his opinion it was difficult to find a book in the older (that is the Middle) Irish "in which there was not some passage so silly or indecent" as to give Mr. Justice Madden (his questioner) "a shock from which he would never recover during the rest of his life." He offered to bring Judge Madden, or any of the Commission, to his rooms in college and administer to them a series of these shocks, but it is not recorded in the Report whether or not they went. All Irish literature he went on to say (by implication) is folk-lore, and all folk-lore (he said expressly) is "abominable." This is one of the opinions, and Dr. Atkinson is apparently unique in it and not a little droll. To a certain extent, Trinity College has dissociated itself from this wholesale condemnation of a literature which many distinguished members of its body have endeavoured to make known. The normal opinion of scholars, who have either not felt or have recovered from the shock, is that the traditional Irish sagas, as they have come down to us, contain much that is of interest and not a little beauty for any reader. And for the ordinary Irishman or Irishwoman, whom it is proposed to educate, or merely to delight, by the revival of these old tales, it will be found, I think, that the literature has a special appeal. I judge by myself; the memories that haunt the Irish mountains and shores, from Ben Bulbin to Ben Edair, waken my imagination with a more living touch than all that is told with

greater art of an alien Thessaly, and Tara is more to me than Camelot. France may admire Mistral; but it is for Provence that he describes the life and scenery of Provence, and for Provence that he weaves into his poems the history and traditions of his own country. The value of a literature lies in its power to interest, and no literature and no history can be to any country what are the history of its own race or the literature that sprang from its soil. Few serious thinkers will deny that every civilised man should be familiar with the history of his own race, and it is at least doubtful whether that familiarity is possible without a knowledge of the racial tongue. And it is not history alone that is needed. M. Darmesteter writes in a fine passage, translated by Mr. Downer:

A nation needs poetry: it lives not by bread alone, but in the ideal as well. Religious beliefs are weakening; and if the sense of poetic ideals dies along with the religious sentiment, there will remain nothing among the lower classes but material and brutal instincts.

Whether the *Félibres* were conscious of this danger, or met the popular need instinctively, I cannot say. At any rate, their work is a good one and a wholesome one. There still circulates, down to the lowest stratum of the people, a stream of poetry, often obscure, until now looked upon with disdain by all except scholars. I mean folklore, beliefs, traditions and popular tales. Before this source of poetry could disappear completely, the *Félibres* had the happy idea of taking it up, giving it a new literary form, thus giving back to the people, clothed in the brilliant colours of poetry, the creation of the people themselves.

With very few alterations, this should hold good of the work that is being done by the Gaelic revival in Ireland. It will be asked by Englishmen why these people, all of whom speak English, cannot find their account in English poetry. The

simplest answer is the fact: they do not, and they cannot. What they take from England is the worst, not the best; and that is true even of the men of genius among them. Neither Carleton nor Banim was able to assimilate the virtues of English literature; the merit in their tales lies in the Irish qualities, the defects lie in the tawdry and superficial tricks of style picked up from the flashiest models. Nor is this only true of Ireland. Mr. Baring Gould, in a recently published *BOOK OF BRITANNY*, devotes a page to Théodore Botrel, the son of a blacksmith, and a Breton poet. And this is M. Botrel's account of his own objects.

We are menaced with a great evil. Not only is the Breton tongue threatened, but the Breton soul itself. That flower of sentiment which was its beauty is ready to shrivel up at contact with a materialistic civilisation. Vulgar songs are penetrating throughout the land of the saints, brought home from the barrack and dropped by commercial travellers. I have done what I can to substitute for these depressing compositions something that shall smell of the broom and contain a waft of the soil.

The reason for the fact here attested, and attested by many witnesses in Ireland, is I think admirably given in a passage from Alphonse Daudet's words in commendation of Mistral's work, rendered by Mr. Downer.

It is a bad thing to become wholly loosened from the soil, to forget the village church-spire. Curiously enough, poetry attaches only to objects that have come down to us, that have had long use. What is called *progress*, a vague and very doubtful term, rouses the lower parts of our intelligence. The higher parts vibrate the better for what has moved and inspired a long series of imaginative minds, inheriting each from a predecessor, strengthened by sight of the same landscapes, by the same perfumes, by the touch of the same furniture polished by wear. Very ancient impressions sink into the depth of that obscure memory

which we may call the race-memory, out of which is woven the mass of individual memories.

That is the plea for the study of a literature based on the old traditions, the old history, and the old beliefs of the race, and written in the old tongue, but in the modern form of that tongue. Here again there is a conflict of opinion over the value of Irish. The written language altered materially after the break-up of the old order when Ireland was completely crushed and conquered under Elizabeth and James. Up to that time the order of the bards had subsisted as a professional literary class, and had rigidly maintained a literary idiom growing gradually more and more divorced from common speech. In the first half of the seventeenth century, in the general break-up, a man called Keating departed from the tradition and wrote in popular Irish a history of Ireland, and other works. That was the beginning (according to Dr. Hyde) of a new literature which circulated surreptitiously in manuscript throughout Ireland, and received continual additions both in prose and verse. These manuscripts abounded all over the country but more specially in Munster; poverty, and the apathy born of poverty, did their work in Ulster and Connaught. Then came the blow of the famine, which fell chiefly on the Irish speakers, and the continuity of the literary tradition was for the first time snapped. The heart was out of the people, and for a time they made up their minds that the way of salvation lay in becoming Anglicised. The institution of National Schools killed out the hedge-schoolmasters, many of whom had taught in Irish; the parents opposed themselves strongly to the use of Irish by their children, and a generation brought up without a knowledge how

to read or write Irish¹ lost the respect for the Irish manuscripts which were destroyed by thousands. Still the tongue survived, and as the people gradually recovered from the terrible blow, racial pride began to reassert itself; for this language-movement, whether in Ireland or Provence, is an expression of the love of country and tends to foster that historic spirit of true nationality which Lord Beaconsfield once attributed to the Irish. But, as was natural in the absence of a written literature, divergence of dialects accentuated itself; and one of the questions hotly fought out before the Commission concerned the very existence of the language. Dr. Atkinson denied that there was such a thing as a standard of the tongue; he refused the title of Irish to what Dr. Hyde wrote, it was "an imbroglia, a mélange, an omnium gatherum." Dr. Hyde retorted that an Ulster and a Kerry peasant talking Gaelic together differed no more in speech from one another than they would have differed when talking English; and further, that what he wrote in the idiom used by educated Connaught men could be understood and enjoyed by Gaelic speakers in any part of the island. He cited testimony which

seems conclusive. It is much to be wished that Dr. Atkinson, who knows all languages, would institute a comparison between the Provençal as it was when Mistral and his fellows took it in hand and the Irish when Dr. Hyde began his work. To judge from Mr. Downer's book it would appear that the notion of using Provençal as a literary medium had dropped out of men's minds altogether till first Jasmin, and then Roumanille, took it up; whereas in Ireland there still was in oral circulation a large body of folk-song, and in manuscript a considerable quantity of stories and histories.

The question for the educational authorities to consider, whether they should or should not encourage the study of Irish among young people not born to speak it, has been reduced to three heads. First, that of practical or commercial utility, which may be at once set aside. Consideration of these ends usually defeats itself; and in any case I doubt very much whether the man who starts his career in Ireland would not be more helped by a slight knowledge of Gaelic than by a similar knowledge of French or German. None of the three will however probably ever bring him in a penny; shorthand would be more marketable. Secondly, that of the language's value as an exercise for the mind. Here the Trinity College experts deny its fitness to be a subject for study, while half a score of eminent scholars on the Continent, and, what is more to the point, eminent Celtic scholars with Welsh experience, affirm. Thirdly, that of its use as a key to literature. Here no one proposes to put it into serious comparison with French or German. But it may be urged that the experts overlook altogether the special value that Irish literature has for Irish people. The study begun

¹ The rules of the Board of Education everywhere permitted a teacher to teach Irish-speaking children in Irish, but no attempt was made to see that this was done, nor to provide Irish-speaking teachers, though the advisability of doing so was repeatedly urged. The practice was almost universally to teach children who had never heard English spoken till they came to school the rudiments of reading and writing in English. The result was that the scholars learned little, forgot quickly what they learned, and became the illiterate peasantry that they are to-day. Now some attempt is being made to follow the precedent which has been set with great success in Wales, and teach Irish speakers through the medium of Irish. The Board of Education is, however, sluggish in the matter, and the outlying peasantry are as yet seen little touched by the revival as yet.

at school or college is by no means so likely to be dropped in later life as that of any foreign language; of its power of stimulating interest and intellectual enthusiasm the Gaelic League is there to testify.

This League is the most interesting and significant outgrowth of Nationalism that Ireland has seen in my time. It is not political, but it is national; that is to say, it aims at fostering by all means the distinct and separate national life of Ireland. It is in close sympathy with the industrial movement led by Mr. Plunket, and aspires, like Mr. Plunket, to keep Irishmen in Ireland by making life there more prosperous and more attractive. These two movements differ from others in that they are constructive not destructive; they do not cry *Down with everything*, or anything; they try to build or rebuild. In a sense the Gaelic League is the more interesting, as it is the less utilitarian, though any one who has followed the work of Mr. Plunket and his associates knows well that they appeal to men's more generous emotions as well as to their pockets. But, grossly considered, the industrial movement is like the Land League and its successors, a movement to put money into the pocket of Irish farmers and peasants. It differs from them in not proposing to do this by taking it out of the pockets of landlords. The Gaelic League aims at an object which is partly sentimental, if you like, but in reality educational in the highest degree,—at a revival of the national life on its intellectual side. It appeals to Nationalism in its finest form, and it has met with most response where Nationalism has in the past been least profitable. The townsmen have made nothing out of their principles, the farmers have pocketed a solid reduction in rent,

and a solid lump sum for tenant-right. It is the townsmen who are supporting the Gaelic League. Especially the whole class of Government servants, post-office clerks and the like, who were debarred from joining any political organisation, have thrown themselves into this with enthusiasm. The meetings of the different branches have of course a social character which has been heightened by the inclusion of the national songs and dances as part of the study, and a very excellent part. But substantially you find in Dublin, in Belfast, and in any other considerable town, groups of clerks, shopmen and domestic servants, coming together evening after evening to work at the rudiments of a very difficult language which to at least nine in ten of them is as strange as to any Englishman. The little primer *SIMPLE LESSONS IN IRISH* by the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, which I bought the other day (and a better planned introduction to the study of a language I have never come across) was marked *121st thousand*. It is fair to add that the fifth part of the same work was only in the thirteenth thousand. But let it be remembered that this whole movement is a growth of the last few years. Fifteen years ago, ten even, Dr. Hyde was a voice crying in the wilderness. Now he has not only his League with its far-reaching organisation (even here in London it has a membership of twelve hundred) but he has the Church at his back. Readers of Father Sheehan's *MY NEW CURATE* will remember the priest's opinion of the cheap literature that is hawked about; and the Church had wisely accepted the best means of combating this vulgarising and demoralising agency. And lastly the League has secured at least the formal support of Mr. Redmond and his party, many of whom are already

strong for it, though many, and those not the least influential, are by long habit inclined to think of nothing but the land-question in all its details, and (in shadowy outline) the parliament on College Green.

The movement, like everything else in Ireland (or for that matter like any other product of a generous enthusiasm) has its droll side; a new Daudet has a new Tarascon before him. On the whole I do not know that anyone connected with it is more ridiculous than the literary gentleman who perorates or writes in good set phrase for or against a language of which he knows nothing; this essay, some may say, is not a bad illustration. However, we shall probably all be compelled to come in, even Mr. George Moore and Dr. Mahaffy. We are run hard, though, by the Pan-Celts, who not contented with reviving the language, the airs, and the step-dances, seek also to resuscitate, or re-invent, the costume. Mr. W. B. Yeats, who has a fine vicarious sense of humour, solemnly warned the Pan-Celts that they were heading straight for collision with a force that could, if it knew its strength, wreck any movement and would certainly wreck theirs. They had reckoned, he told them, without the Small Boy, and on the Small Boy they would come to ruin. But Mr. William Gibson, Lord Ashbourne's son (for this seed sprouts in the most unlikely and most embarrassing places) defies the Small Boy, not only of London but his more formidable congener of Dublin. I hasten to add that the Dublin street arab sees no joke in the interchange of Gaelic salutations and (I am sure) smokes "Slainte" cigarettes with delight. We have not yet reached the stage when the names of all streets and railway-stations will be written up in Irish, but town-councillors who object to gladden the Gael with an alterna-

tive version incur a disagreeable publicity, and at least one railway-company has yielded to persuasion. Cricket is threatened with taboo (but the Irish climate already goes far in that direction) and so is Rugby football, a sport in which the Irish excel. Those, however, who advocate the disuse of the latter plead for some mitigation of the severity of the Gaelic game.

But these absurdities are only on the surface. Fundamentally the movement is admirable. It is allied with the industrial propaganda which every sensible Irishman applauds; it is allied with a crusade against the curse of drunkenness; it is allied with the attempt to create a national dramatic literature (as I have attempted to show in *THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW* for last month); it is giving to the people a keen intellectual interest, which is all the more likely to thrive because it is taken partly as a pastime, partly as an expression of the most genuine patriotism. And though the peasantry who have the language actually in their keeping, who are the true repositories of the national tradition, are slow to move, in Ireland as elsewhere, yet it is impossible that they can be long indifferent to the renewal of their language which they habitually discuss and appreciate as few Englishmen, but many Frenchmen, discuss and appreciate their own speech. More than once I have heard a Connaught man speak of the pleasure it was to hear such a one of his acquaintance recite a poem in Irish: "He had the right way of it, surely." And again and again I have heard them deplore the falling off among the younger folk in correctness of diction and even in accent. "They do not seem to be able to twisht their tongues round it, the way we used to," one of them said to me the other

day. And in the last twelve months the change is notable: last summer in the West of Donegal no one had heard of the movement; this year in Donegal and Mayo alike there was nothing the people were more ready to discuss than the Irish teaching in the schools. I see no reason to doubt, but every reason to believe that there will come into being a new literature in the old tongue; and that literature will be as it was in Provence, the work of men with whom poetry or writing is a cult or passion, not a trade. Such men will turn with hope and emulation to survey the work done by Mistral and his fellow-workers; and to them may be commended the sonnet prefixed by Mistral to his great dictionary. I transcribe the sestet of it, to give the reader some notion of this splendid daughter of the Latin, with its sonorous double rhymes and profusion of stately words. Mistral speaks of his own work, and gives thanks like the ploughman or the shepherd on the eve of St. John.

En terro, fin qu'au sistre, a cava moun
aire;

E lou brounze rouman e l'or dis em-
peiraie

Treluson au soulèu dintre lou blad que
sort. . . .

O pople d'ou Miejour, escouto moun
arengo:

Se vos reconquista l'empèri de ta lengo,
Pèr t'arnesca de nou, pesco en aquéu
Tresor.

My plough has dug into the soil down
to the rock; and the Roman bronze and
the gold of the Emperors gleam in the
sunlight among the growing wheat.

Oh people of the South, heed my say-
ing: If you wish to win back the Empire
of your language, equip yourselves anew
by drawing upon this Treasury.

Under the speech of the peasants,
the speech that grows like corn in
the fields, lie buried treasures from
an older world of great kings and
great artists, the words and the
phrases and the thoughts of an
ancient and illustrious civilisation;
and these Mistral has brought again
to the light of day, no longer to "rust
unburnished," but to "shine in use."
Under the soil in Ireland also there
lie bronze and gold, and Dr. Hyde in
his ploughing may be as fortunate
as Mistral.

STEPHEN GWYNN.